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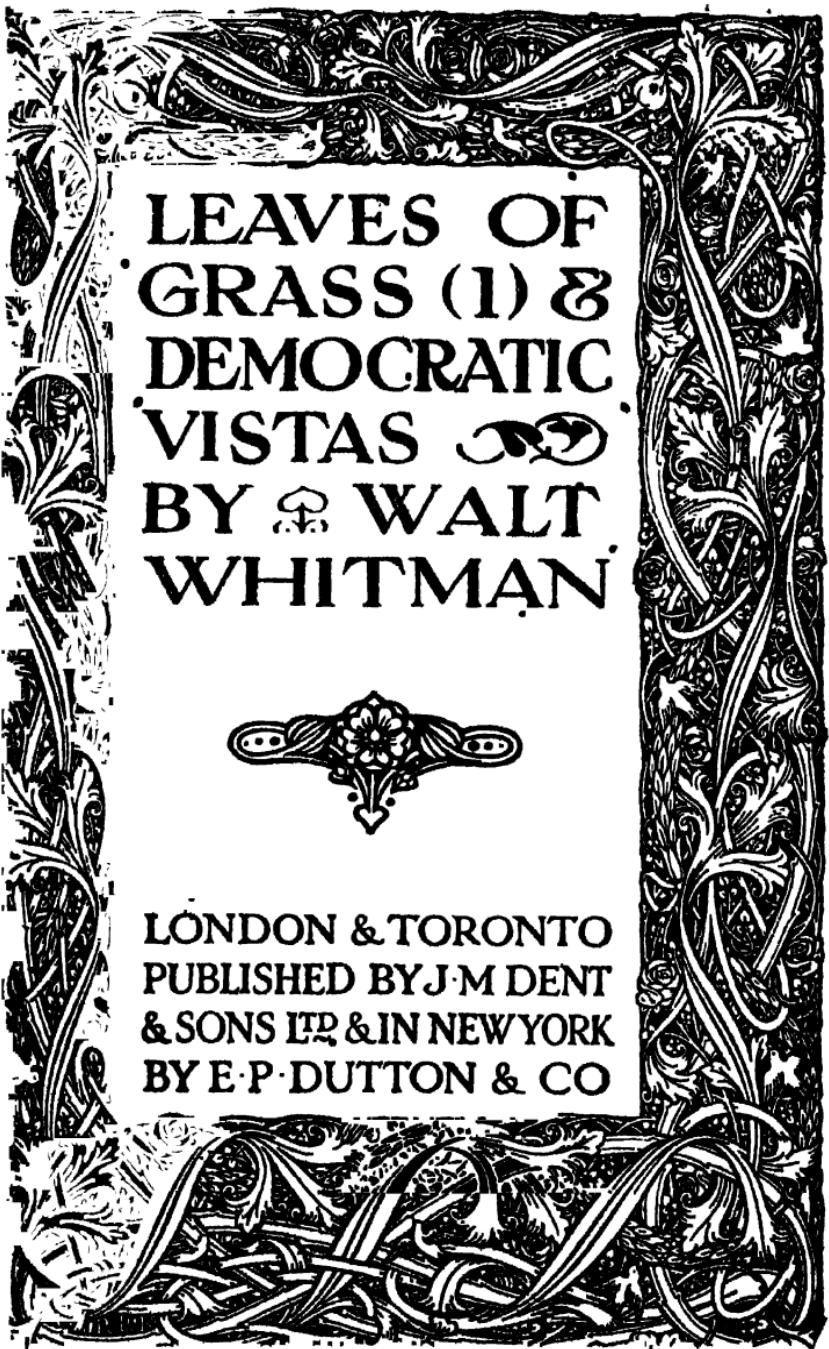


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POETS
ARE
THE
TRUMPETS
WHICH SING
TO BATTLE
POETS
ARE THE
UNACKNOWLEDGED
LEGISLATORS
OF THE
WORLD SHELLEY



LEAVES OF
GRASS (1) &
DEMOCRATIC
VISTAS 
BY  WALT
WHITMAN



LONDON & TORONTO
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EVERY time a new Whitman book appears I go back to the talks I had with Walt about his editions in the last years of his life. He was never wholly sure of himself. He is supposed by people who know nothing about egotism to have been the master egotist. But he was in fact quite inclined to under-accentuate his victories. "I guess I've got a foothold." That's about the extremest thing he said at the end. He would playfully compare his gains and losses and ask whether he had after all made good. He did this in the most gracious spirit. Without petulance. Without censuring the world or blaming himself. He in effect stood aside from his own career and figured up its interior and outward intimations.

This was natural to a man who had to fight all his way up. To whom the world never willingly yielded an inch. He had been a rebel twice over. He was a rebel in his art. He was a rebel in his message. Though a conservative now and then accepts Whitman, Whitman as a rule does nothing for conservatism. Though radicals now and then reject Whitman, Whitman as a rule does everything for radicalism. I don't mean that he offers to substitute one creed for another. He in fact expressly avoids that. But he belongs to revolt. He makes people dissatisfied with the conditions of modern life. He said to me: "We have built up things on corrupt foundations. What are we going to do about it? Keep on building higher and higher with the foundations wrong? Or get our foundations right before we go any farther?" And he also said: "I want to see the whole thing challenged: I want us to start where we should: not with property but with man." He preached accordingly. He made up his mind to put a man into a book. A whole man. Himself. A democrat. In doing this he had first of all to run counter to the prejudice of scholarship. He had chosen a peculiar medium of expression. Then he had also to meet the antagonism of the traditions. He spoke of it himself as "two fights in one."

So, from 1855, when *Leaves of Grass* started on its stormy voyage, till 1892, when the old young man, still jubilant, sailed into port, Whitman was a war centre at which a few

stalwart supporters gathered and against which the many who looked upon him as a pretender directed their fire. Whitman was a new force let loose on the old earth. People had to get acquainted with it. This they did in the usual way. By trying to kill it they got used to it. By getting used to it they learned to tolerate it. Toleration became respect. Respect became love.

But the general feeling about Whitman? Where is it to-day? I am told that a whole native Whitman edition has recently been destroyed in Russia. In Toronto the authorities raided all the book stores and destroyed a great many of the objectionable classics, among them the Whitmans. Now you can't buy a copy of *Leaves of Grass* in Ontario. Such things are still happening. And with them the still timid average criticism of the periodical press. Whitman has now lasted so long even his enemies admit he is likely to last a while longer. They say he is bound to go out. He is after all only a candle dip. But he has disappointed their original prophecies. The fact remains that *Leaves of Grass* has been translated as a whole into the French and Italian, and piecemeal into the Spanish, the German and the Dutch. Whitman is quoted everywhere. He is mentioned everywhere. Every book of essays or addresses treating of modernism in literature is forced to reckon with Whitman. Every lecture syllabus which undertakes to deal with contemporary influences has to explain the Whitman diversion. The colleges, some of them, have Whitman courses. The magazines are ready to discuss Whitman and to print the memories of his friends.

When Whitman was alive and the little group of us were about him in Camden we were called crazy. Gilder wrote me after reading the manuscript of volume one of my *With Walt Whitman in Camden*: "The Camden crowd is vindicated." It makes no difference about the Camden crowd. Whitman is vindicated. That is the main thing. An Englishman lecturing in America said: "Continental European Bohemia knows only two places in America, and they are not New York and Chicago, no: they are Camden and Concord." I used to say to Whitman playfully: "I'll live to see you published at fifty dollars a volume." And he would ask: "Do you mean it?" Shaking his head and adding: "No: you can't: we're lucky to be printed at anything a volume." But I did live to see the fifty-dollar book.

I seem to have travelled a long way with Whitman. When

I first met him I was a small boy in Camden. Then nearly everybody discredited him. Everybody found some reason— it was not always the same reason—for dissent. They went to my mother and protested against my association with "the lecherous old man." They wondered if it was safe to invite him into their houses. I grew up in that atmosphere of suspicion. I got accustomed to thinking of him as an outlaw. But I had no doubts of him. He would talk with me about his supporters. "They are very few," he would say: "but they are devoted." He one day gave me a bunch of letters to take to the post-office. They were all to Englishmen. I remember that one was to Symonds, that one was to William Michael Rossetti, that one was to Dowden, and that one was to Tennyson: they impressed me at that time: and there were three or four others—one, I think, going to Carpenter, and another to a man named Riley, who knew and wrote about Ruskin. I said to Walt: "You have distinguished friends even if they are few." He laughed quietly over this. "Yes: as I said, they are devoted: and so many of them are in England: you noticed that, I guess. Did I ever tell you about my English friends? Well—I will do so sometime. I want you to know just how magnificently they behaved to me in seventy-three to seventy-six: it was truly splendid: it quite took me off my feet." He did often tell me this story. It always warmed him up. He was amused over one incident related to him by a visitor who had called on Tennyson. The visitor asked Tennyson what he thought of Whitman. "Whitman? Whitman? you want to know what I think about Whitman? I don't know that I think about him.* I wonder if I ever really think about him? But I am aware of his existence: he is a vast monster of some sort—a monster, sir: I can't make him out: but I hear the noise he makes and see the commotion of the waters as he dashes along: I suppose I do not think of him—think of him: but I acknowledge and respect him: he is a force that without explaining itself to me I still acquiesce in."

It was true of Whitman in England as in America. That while he missed it with the second-rate men and the critics the first-rate men deferred to him at once. Whitman was convincing to Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott. He immediately justified himself with men and women of original insight. But the scholars insisted upon something which was in line with their inheritance. This intruder right out of the streets

brought in too much dirt with him. Whitman was conclusive as viewed by most of those who made the Victorian period in English literature illustrious. He succeeded with the discoverers. The young men came to him. Some even who in later days reversed their decisions. Even Swinburne and Gosse in their inspirational years. Such men. And men like our Americans Bayard Taylor and Sidney Lanier. When these men were fresh they realised the vivid quality of Whitman's intuitions. But as they cooled off their logic disproved him. Meanwhile Whitman was going into the crowd. He was invading continental Europe. Revolutionaries sung him. They utilise him in music. They like his short pieces and make them into songs. And they take the big things and convert them into tone poems. Sibelius has done this on your side and Conversé has done it here. There is a Whitman symphony composed by an Englishman. They are hearing of him in Japan and China. I suppose I have been visited at one time or other by Whitman people from every country on the globe. New Zealand has its life of Whitman. He has been a bone of contention to the culture of Germany. Books have been written there taking sides on his philosophy of sex. This debate has been pursued almost with rancour. I cite these indications at random to illustrate the universality of Whitman's fame. It has gone everywhere. Everybody has listened. Everybody has something to say about it. Whitman is still largely negatived. But he has never been curbed. He is one of the inevitabilities.

Whitman for years took his Sunday dinners at Harned's house in Camden. I remember a Christmas when Ernest Rhys was there. Harned asked Whitman one day: "Walt, do you ever have any doubts about yourself?" "What do you mean, Tom?" "About the future of *Leaves of Grass*: whether it will arrive or not?" Walt was quiet for a minute and then said: "Tom—that's a poser: I'm not the one to answer it." Harned said: "I can answer it and answer it with yes: you will arrive. But that's not what I want. I want your answer." I put in: "He wants you to look at yourself as if you wasn't yourself and answer." Walt was again silent but finally said in his slow way, as if thinking it out as he talked: "I'll tell you how it looks to me, Tom: yes I will: how it looks to me. I can assure you that I have had moods in which the whole business seemed surely about to go to smash: *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman, everything before and after. Then

other moods intervene in which I have the feeling of something in me, in the *Leaves*, that is vital—that may live: something not exactly mine but spoken through me that must outlast me: something not owed to my ego but having a race quality, fitting in with the struggle of democracy in our time to free itself from the clutter of the past." "Hurrah!" cried Harned. And the hurrah went round the table. "Then Walt said quietly: 'If I say amen when you are all so good to me you will not misunderstand, will you?'" That fervent offhand utterance gave us the clue we wished. That is Whitman's why and wherefore. That something or other which baffled yet persuaded Tennyson. That something or other which may for ever baffle but will finally persuade the popular will wherever Whitman is read. "I do not anticipate ever being received in lieu of any technical philosophy: I am something different: I don't provide theories for people: I ask them about their own theories—I spur them on so they do their own speculation." That's the way he put it to me. Again I have heard him say: "The main thing is having people understand people—brothers brothers I suppose that's where I shine if at all: in bringing people together—in bringing people together: in insisting upon it that the differences shall not be accentuated. We are more alike than not alike: we are more noble than not noble: that I want to say and say again for ever and always" I asked him: "Do you provide for progress? Is your feeling about all this likely to weaken the fibre of those who accept you?" He thought not. "But if it does then I stand condemned. Maybe the best answer to all that would be your own assertion—I have heard you make it often—that bourbons have very little interest in *Leaves of Grass*: that you find practically all intense *Leaves of Grassers* ardent advocates of the new humanities."

Every time we brought out a new edition of the *Leaves* or brought out one of his subsidiary volumes, Walt would call it "the conquest of a new world." When we finished *November Boughs* he said: "Now what shall we do? Like Alexander I sigh for other worlds to conquer." It is still frequently said as it was in Walt's own hearing: "Here is the poet of democracy and the democracy repudiates him." But Walt was not worried by that charge. "I refer to a democracy that is yet unborn," he said. "Which means that when your democracy comes it will know you?" He assented to this right off. "Exactly," he said. "And it's partly

your job to produce it?" "Exactly," he said again. Just as many people misconstrued him when he said "I," just so many people, some of them the same people, misunderstood him when he said "America." They supposed the "I, Walt Whitman, a cosmos," was Walt exclusively, and not just as surely John Smith, the same cosmos. And they supposed that his America was something geographical and not as surely his England or his anything provided the democratic spirit horizoned its idealism. I showed him a photograph of a group of Englishmen. "How American they look!" he exclaimed. If you want to misrepresent Whitman you will regard this as parochial. But if you want to know him according to his own size and shape you will see that it is intercontinental. Any Americanism that Whitman ever had in mind was all inclusive. When you are gone so far, when you are so big, when you are so beautiful, you are American. That is, you are a democrat among democrats. So he would talk of the Americanisation of the world. Not, of course, intending to imply that we, occupying the geographical America, were to evangelise the earth. His America came from within not from without. It is imperative that Europeans should get Whitman in this perspective. Otherwise he has moments which they might ascribe to simple bombast. Carlyle spoke of Whitman as one who thought he was a big man because he lived in a big country. But Carlyle missed the real slant. If he had been more patient he might have seen that Whitman thought America was a big country because it lived in him. For to Whitman the people inevitably are first. That's what *Leaves of Grass* all comes to. The declaration that the people are first. Not a portion of the people. Not the saving remnant. But the everyday people. The vast overflowing populations. They are first. Matthew Arnold, who couldn't see Whitman, couldn't see this. When he was asked by an American in Philadelphia what he thought of Whitman this same Matthew Arnold raised his eyebrows and answered his questioner with a question: "Ah! what does Longfellow think of Whitman?"

In one of our chats I said to Whitman: "I not only expect to live to see you sell at fifty dollars a volume. I expect to live to see you sell at ten cents a volume." Which pleased him. "That is, you expect me to be in demand superficially among collectors and profoundly in the crowd? Good!" I have seen both things happen. And now I am seeing another

thing happen. And even assisting it to happen. My small boy wonder is having my man's confirmations. That which I looked ahead towards as a boy I look back upon as a man. Huxley said he helped rock the cradle of evolution. I can't say literally that I helped rock the cradle of *Leaves of Grass*. "I came along a little too late for that. But I was on the ground before the youngster was through crawling. I have had something to do with everything that has since occurred to *Leaves of Grass*. Towards the close Whitman wrote his noble self-survey: "A backward glance o'er travell'd roads." I have lived long enough and been intimately enough associated with the Whitman pilgrimage to bring that backward glance up to date. Way buried in the fifties, when he was misrepresented by almost everybody who didn't ignore him, Whitman wrote a review of his own book in which he said: "This is to prove either the most lamentable of failures, or the most glorious of triumphs, in the known history of literature." It looks to me as if it was the most glorious of triumphs.

HORACE TRAUBEL.

CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY, U S A.,
January 8, 1912.

The following is a list of works by Walt Whitman:—

WORKS—*Leaves of Grass*, 1855; other editions, 1856, 1860 1861, 1867, 1872, 1881, 1889, 1892, 1897; *Drum-Taps*, and *Sequel to Drum-Taps*, 1865, *Poems*, selected and ed. by W. M. Rossetti, 1868, new edition, 1886; selected and ed. by E. Rhys, 1886, *Democratic Vistas*, 1871; *Passage to India*, 1871; *As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free*, 1872, *Two Rivulets*, 1873; *Memoranda of the War*, 1875, *Complete Works*, 2 vols., 1876, other editions, 1882, 1888 1889, 1892, *Specimen Days and Collect*, 1883, *November-Boughs*, 1888; *Good-Bye My Fancy*, 1891; *Complete Prose Works*, 1898; *Notes and Fragments*, ed. by R. M. Bucke, 1899; *Complete Writings*, ed. by R. M. Bucke, 10 vols., 1902.

LIFE AND LETTERS—*Notes on Walt Whitman, as Poet and Person*, by John Burroughs, 1866, 1871; *The Good Gray Poet: A Vindication*, by W. D. O'Connor, 1866; by R. M. Bucke, 1883, *Autobiographia*, 1892; by J. Addington Symonds, 1893; *In re Walt Whitman*, ed. by H. L. Traubel, R. M. Bucke, and T. B. Harnerd, 1893; *Reminiscences*, by W. S. Kennedy, 1896; *Calamus*; *Letters written during the Years 1868-1880*, ed. by R. M. Bucke, 1897, *The Wound Dresser. Letters written from the Hospitals in Washington*, ed. by R. M. Bucke, 1898, *Walt Whitman's Diary in Canada*, ed. by W. S. Kennedy, 1904; *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, by H. L. Traubel, 1906, *Life*, by H. B. Binns, 1906; *Life and Work*, by Bliss Perry, 1906.

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LEAVES OF GRASS

INSCRIPTIONS

ONE'S-SELF I SING

ONE'S-SELF I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse,
I say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing.

AS I PONDER'D IN SILENCE

As I ponder'd in silence,
Returning upon my poems, considering, lingering long,
A Phantom arose before me with distrustful aspect,
Terrible in beauty, age, and power,
The genius of poets of old lands,
As to me directing like flame its eyes,
With finger pointing to many immortal songs,
And menacing voice, *What singest thou ?* it said.
Know'st thou not there is but one theme for ever-enduring bards ?
And that is the theme of War, the fortune of battles,
The making of perfect soldiers.

Be it so, then I answer'd,
I too haughty Shade also sing war, and a longer and greater one
than any,

*Waged in my book with varying fortune, with flight, advance and
 retreat, victory deferr'd and wavering,
 (Yet methinks certain, or as good as certain, at the last), the field
 the world,
 For life and death, for the Body and for the eternal Soul,
 Lo, I too am come, chanting the chant of battles,
 I above all promote brave soldiers.*

IN CABIN'D SHIPS AT SEA

*In cabin'd ships at sea,
 The boundless blue on every side expanding,
 With whistling winds and music of the waves, the large imperious
 waves,
 Or some lone bark buoy'd on the dense marine,
 Where joyous, full of faith, spreading white sails,
 She cleaves the ether mid the sparkle and the foam of day, or
 under many a star at night,
 By sailors young and old haply will I, a reminiscence of the land,
 be read,
 In full rapport at last.*

*Here are our thoughts, voyagers' thoughts,
 Here not the land, firm land, alone appears, may then by them be
 said,
 The sky o'erarches here, we feel the undulating deck beneath our feet,
 We feel the long pulsation, ebb and flow of endless motion,
 The tones of unseen mystery, the vague and vast suggestions of the
 briny world, the liquid-flowing syllables,
 The perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage, the melancholy
 rhythm,
 The boundless vista and the horizon far and dim are all here,
 And this is ocean's poem.*

*Then falter not, O book, fulfil your destiny,
 You not a reminiscence of the land alone,
 You too as a lone bark cleaving the ether, purpos'd I know not
 whither, yet ever full of faith,
 Consort to every ship that sails, sail you!
 Bear forth to them folded my love (dear mariners, for you I fold
 it here in every leaf);
 Speed on my book! spread your white sails, my little bark,
 athwart the imperious waves,*

Inscriptions

3

Chant on, sail on, bear o'er the boundless blue from me to every
sea,
This song for mariners and all their ships.

TO FOREIGN LANDS

I HEARD that you ask'd for something to prove this puzzle the
New World,
And to define America, her athletic Democracy,
Therefore I send you my poems that you behold in them what
you wanted.

TO A HISTORIAN

You who celebrate by-gones,
Who have explored the outward, the surfaces of the races, the
life that has exhibited itself,
Who have treated of man as the creature of politics, aggregates,
rulers, and priests,
I, habitan of the Alleghanies, treating of him as he is in himself
in his own rights,
Pressing the pulse of the life that has seldom exhibited itself
(the great pride of man in himself),
Chanter of Personality, outlining what is yet to be,
I project the history of the future.

TO THEE, OLD CAUSE

To thee, old cause!
Thou peerless, passionate, good cause,
Thou stern, remorseless, sweet idea,
Deathless throughout the ages, races, lands,
After a strange sad war, great war for thee,
(I think all war through time was really fought, and ever will be
really fought, for thee),
These chants for thee, the eternal march of thee.

(A war, O soldiers, not for itself alone,
Far, far more stood silently waiting behind, now to advance in
this book.)

Thou orb of many orbs!
 Thou seething principle! thou well-kept, latent germ! thou
 • centre!
 Around the idea of thee the war revolving,
 With all its angry and vehement play of causes,
 (With vast results to come for thrice a thousand years),
 These recitatives for thee—my book and the war are one,
 Merged in its spirit I and mine, as the contest hinged on thee,
 As a wheel on its axis turns, this book unwitting to itself.
 Around the idea of thee.

EIDÓLONS

I MET a seer,
 Passing the hues and objects of the world,
 The fields of art and learning, pleasure, sense,
 To glean eidólons.

Put in thy chants, said he,
 No more the puzzling hour nor day, nor segments, parts, put in,
 Put first before the rest as light for all and entrance-song of all,
 That of eidólons.

Ever the dim beginning,
 Ever the growth, the rounding of the circle,
 Ever the summit and the merge at last (to surely start again),
 Eidólons! eidólons!

Ever the mutable,
 Ever materials, changing, crumbling, re-cohering,
 Ever the ateliers, the factories divine,
 Issuing eidólons.

Lo, I or you,
 Or woman, man, or state, known and unknown,
 We seeming solid wealth, strength, beauty build,
 But really build eidólons.

The ostent evanescent,
 The substance of an artist's mood or savan's studies long,
 Or warrior's, martyr's, hero's toils,
 To fashion his eidólon.

Of every human life,
 (The units gather'd, posted, not a thought, emotion, deed, left
 out),
 The whole or large or small summ'd, added up,
 In its eidólon.

The old, old urge,
 Based on the ancient pinnacles, lo, newer, higher pinnacles,
 From science and the modern still impell'd,
 The old, old urge, eidólons.

The present now and here,
 America's busy, teeming, intricate whirl,
 Of aggregat' and segregate for only thence releasing,
 To-day's eidólons.

These with the past,
 Of vanish'd lands, of all the reigns of kings across the sea,
 Old conquerors, old campaigns, old sailors' voyages,
 Joining eidólons.

Densities, growth, façades,
 Strata of mountains, soils, rocks, giant trees,
 Far-horn, far-dying, living long, to leave,
 Eidólons everlasting.

Exalté, rapt, ecstatic,
 The visible but their womb of birth,
 Of orbic tendencies to shape and shape and shape,
 The mighty earth-eidólon.

All space, all time,
 (The stars, the terrible perturbations of the suns,
 Swelling, collapsing, ending, serving their longer, shorter use),
 Fill'd with eidólons only.

The noiseless myriads,
 The infinite oceans where the rivers empty,
 The separate countless free identities, like eyesight,
 The true realities, eidólons.

Not thus the world,
 Nor these the universes, they the universes,

Purport and end, ever the permanent life of life,
Eidólons, eidólons.

Beyond thy lectures learn'd professor,
Beyond thy telescope or spectroscope, observer keen; beyond
all mathematics,
Beyond the doctor's surgery, anatomy, beyond the chemist
with his chemistry,
The entities of entities, eidólons.

Unfix'd yet fix'd,
Ever shall be, ever have been and are.
Sweeping the present to the infinite future,
Eidólons, eidólons, eidólons.

The prophet and the bard,
Shall yet maintain themselves, in higher stages yet,
Shall mediate to the Modern, to Democracy, interpret yet to
them,
God and eidólons.

And thee, my soul,
Joys, ceaseless exercises, exaltations,
Thy yearning amply fed at last, prepared to meet,
Thy mates, eidólons.

Thy body permanent,
The body lurking there within thy body,
The only purport of the form thou art, the real I myself,
An image, an eidólón.

Thy very songs not in thy songs,
No special strains to sing, none for itself,
But from the whole resulting, rising at last and floating,
A round full-orb'd eidólón.

FOR HIM I SING

For him I sing,
I raise the present on the past,
(As some perennial tree out of its roots, the present on the past),
With time and space I him dilate and fuse the immortal laws,
To make himself by them the law unto himself.

Inscriptions

WHEN I READ THE BOOK

WHEN I read the book, the biography famous,
And is this then (said I) what the author calls a man's life?
And so will some one when I am dead and gone write my life?
(As if any man really knew aught of my life,
Why even I myself I often think know little or nothing of my
real life,
Only a few hints, a few diffused faint clews and indirections
I seek for my own use to trace out here.)

BEGINNING MY STUDIES

BEGINNING my studies the first step pleas'd me so much,
The mere fact consciousness, these forms, the power of motion,
The least insect or animal, the senses, eyesight, love,
The first step I say awed me and pleas'd me so much.
I have hardly gone and hardly wish'd to go any farther,
But stop and loiter all the time to sing it in ecstatic songs.

BEGINNERS

How they are provided for upon the earth (appearing at
intervals),
How dear and dreadful they are to the earth,
How they inure to themselves as much as to any—what a
paradox appears their age,
How people respond to them, yet know them not,
How there is something relentless in their fate all times,
How all times mischoose the objects of their adulation and
reward,
And how the same inexorable price must still be paid for the
same great purchase.

TO THE STATES

To the States or any one of them, or any city of the States,
Resist much, obey little,
Once unquestioning obedience, once fully enslaved,
Once fully enslaved, no nation, state, city of this earth, ever
afterward resumes its liberty.

ON JOURNEYS THROUGH THE STATES

On journeys through the States we start,
 (Ay through the world, urged by these songs,
 Sailing henceforth to every land, to every sea),
 We willing learners of all, teachers of all, and lovers of all.

We have watch'd the seasons dispensing themselves and passing
 on,
 And have said, Why should not a man or woman do as much
 as the seasons, and effuse as much?

We dwell a while in every city and town,
 We pass through Kanada, the North-east, the vast valley of the
 Mississippi, and the Southern States,
 We confer on equal terms with each of the States,
 We make trial of ourselves and invite men and women to hear,
 We say to ourselves, Remember, fear not, be candid, promulge
 the body and the soul,
 Dwell a while and pass on, be copious, temperate, chaste, mag-
 netic,
 And what you effuse may then return as the seasons return,
 And may be just as much as the seasons.

TO A CERTAIN CANTATRICE

Here, take this gift,
 I was reserving it for some hero, speaker, or general,
 One who should serve the good old cause, the great idea, the
 progress and freedom of the race,
 Some brave confronter of despots, some daring rebel;
 But I see that what I was reserving belongs to you just as much
 as to any.

ME IMPERTURBE

Me imperturbe, standing at ease in Nature,
 Master of all or mistress of all, aplomb in the midst of irrational
 things,
 Imbued as they, passive, receptive, silent as they,

Finding my occupation, poverty, notoriety, foibles, crimes, less
 important than I thought,
 Me toward the Mexican sea, or in the Mannahatta or the Tennes-
 nessee, or far north or inland,
 A river man, or a man of the woods or of any farm-life of these
 • States or of the coast, or the lakes or Kanada,
 Me wherever my life is lived, O to be self-balanced for con-
 tingencies,
 To confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule, accidents, rebuffs,
 • as the trees and animals do.

SAVANNAH

THITHER as I look I see each result and glory retracing itself and
 nothing close, always obligated,
 Thither hours, months, years—thither trades, compacts, estab-
 lishments, even the most minute,
 Thither every-day life, speech, utensils, politics, persons, estates;
 Thither we also, I with my leaves and songs, trustful, admiring,
 As a father to his father going takes his children along with him.

THE SHIP STARTING

O, the unbounded sea,
 On its breast a ship starting, spreading all sails, carrying even
 her moonsails,
 The pennant is flying aloft as she speeds she speeds so stately—
 below emulous waves press forward,
 They surround the ship with shining, curving motions and foam.

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

I HEAR America singing, the varied carols I hear,
 Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe
 and strong,
 The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
 The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off
 work,
 The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deck-
 hand singing on the steamboat deck,
 The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing
 as he stands,

Leaves of Grass

The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morn-
 ing, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
 The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work,
 or of the girl sewing or washing,
 Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
 The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young
 fellows, robust, friendly,
 Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

WHAT PLACE IS BESIEGED?

WHAT place is besieged, and vainly tries to raise the siege?
 Lo, I send to that place a commander, swift, brave, immortal,
 And with him horse and foot, and parks of artillery,
 And artillery-men, the deadliest that ever fired gun.

STILL, THOUGH THE ONE I SING

STILL though the one I sing,
 (One, yet of contradictions made), I dedicate to Nationality,
 I leave in him revolt (O latent right of insurrection! O quench
 less, indispensable fire!)

SHUT NOT YOUR DOORS

SHUT not your doors to me, proud libraries,
 For that which was lacking on all your well-fill'd shelves, yet
 needed most, I bring,
 Forth from the war emerging, a book I have made,
 The words of my book nothing, the drift of it everything,
 A book separate, not link'd with the rest nor felt by the intellect,
 But you ye untold latencies will thrill to every page.

POETS TO COME

POETS to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!
 Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,
 But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater than
 before known,
 Arouse! for you must justify me.

Inscriptions

11

I myself but write one or two indicative words for the future,
I but advance a moment only to wheel and hurry back in the
darkness.

I am a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping, turns a
casual look upon you and then averts his face,
Leaving it to you to prove and define it,
Expecting the main things from you.

TO YOU

STRANGER, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me,
why should you not speak to me?
And why should I not speak to you?

THOU READER

Thou reader throbbest life and pride and love the same as I,
Therefore for thee the following chants.

STARTING FROM PAUMANOK

I

STARTING from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born,
Well-begotten, and rais'd by a perfect mother,
After roaming many lands, lover of populous pavements,
Dweller in Minnehatta my city, or on southern savannas,
Or a soldier camp'd or carrying my knapsack and gun, or a
miner in California,
Or rude in my home in Dakota's woods, my diet meat, my drink
from the spring,
Or withdrawn to muse and meditate in some deep recess,
Far from the clank of crowds intervals passing rapt and happy,
Aware of the fresh free giver the flowing Missouri, aware of
mighty Niagara,
Aware of the buffalo herds grazing the plains, the hirsute and
strong-breasted bull,
Of earth, rocks, fifth-month flowers experienced, stars, rain,
snow, my amaze,
Having studied the mocking-bird's tones and the flight of the
mountain-hawk,
And heard at dawn the univall'd one, the hermit thrush from
the swamp-cedars,
Solitary, singing in the West, I strike up for a New World.

2

Victory, union, faith, identity, time,
The indissoluble compacts, riches, mystery,
Eternal progress, the kosmos, and the modern reports.

This then is life,
Here is what has come to the surface after so many throes and
convulsions.

How curious! how real!
Underfoot the divine soil, overhead the sun.

See revolving the globe,
The ancestor-continents away group'd together,
The present and future continents north and south, with the
isthmus between.

See, vast trackless spaces,
As in a dream they change, they swiftly fill,
Countless masses debouch upon them,
They are now cover'd with the foremost people, arts, institutions,
known.

See, projected through time,
For me an audience interminable.

With firm and regular step they wend, they never stop,
Successions of men, Americanos, a hundred millions,
One generation playing its part and passing on,
Another generation playing its part and passing on in its turn,
With faces turn'd sideways or backward towards me to listen,
With eyes retrospective towards me.

3

Americanos! conquerors! marches humanitarian!
Foremost! century marches! Libertad! masses!
For you a programme of chants.

Chants of the prairies,
Chants of the long-running Mississippi, and down to the Mexican
sea,
Chants of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Min-
nesota,
Chants going forth from the centre from Kansas, and thence
equi-distant,
Shooting in pulses of fire ceaseless to vivify all.

4

Take my leaves America, take them South and take them North,
Make welcome for them everywhere, for they are your own off-
spring,
Surround them East and West, for they would surround you,
And you precedents, connect lovingly with them, for they
connect lovingly with you.

I conn'd old times,
 I sat studying at the feet of the great masters,
 Now if eligible O that the great masters might return and study me.

In the name of these States shall I scorn the antique?
 Why these are the children of the antique to justify it.

5

Dead poets, philosophs, priests,
 Martyrs, artists, inventors, governments: long since,
 Language-shapers on other shores,
 Nations once powerful, now reduced, withdrawn, or desolate,
 I dare not proceed till I respectfully credit what you have left
 wafted hither,
 I have perused it, own it is admirable (moving awhile among it),
 Think nothing can ever be greater, nothing can ever deserve
 more than it deserves,
 Regarding it all intently a long while, then dismissing it,
 I stand in my place with my own day here.

Here lands female and male,
 Here the heir-ship and heiress-ship of the world, here the flame of
 materials,
 Here spirituality the translatress, the openly-avow'd,
 The ever-tending, the finale of visible forms,
 The-satisfier, after due long-waiting now advancing,
 Yes, here comes my mistress the soul.

6

The soul,
 Forever and forever—longer than soil is brown and solid—longer
 than water ebbs and flows.

I will make the poems of materials, for I think they are to be the
 most spiritual poems,
 And I will make the poems of my body and of mortality,
 For I think I shall then supply myself with the poems of my
 soul and of immortality.

I will make a song for these States that no one State may under
 any circumstances be subjected to another State,
 And I will make a song that there shall be comity by day and by
 night between all the States, and between any two of them,

And I will make a song for the ears of the President, full of
 weapons with menacing points,
 And behind the weapons countless dissatisfied faces;
 And a song make I of the One form'd out of all,
 The fang'd and glittering One whose head is over all,
 Resolute warlike One including and over all,
 (However high the head of any else that head is over all).

I will acknowledge contemporary lands,
 I will trail the whole geography of the globe and salute courte-
 ously every city large and small,
 And enjoyments! I will put in my poems that with you is
 heroism upon land and sea,
 And I will report all heroism from an American point of view.

I will sing the song of companionship,
 I will show what alone must finally compact these,
 I believe these are to found their own ideal of manly love,
 indicating it in me,
 I will therefore let flame from me the burning fires that were
 threatening to consume me,
 I will lift what has too long kept down those smouldering fires,
 I will give them complete abandonment,
 I will write the evangel-poem of comrades and of love,
 For who but I should understand love with all its sorrow and
 joy?
 And who but I should be the poet of comrades?

7

I am the credulous man of qualities, ages, races,
 I advance from the people in their own spirit,
 Here is what sings unrestricted faith.

Omnes! omnes! let others ignore what they may,
 I make the poem of evil also, I commemorate that part also,
 I am myself just as much evil as good, and my nation is—and I
 say there is in fact no evil,
 (Or if there is I say it is just as important to you, to the land or
 to me, as any thing else).

I too, following many and follow'd by many, inaugurate a
 religion, I descend into the arena,

(It may be I am destin'd to utter the loudest cries there, the
winner's pealing shouts,
Who knows? they may rise from me yet, and soar above every-
thing).

Each is not for its own sake,
I say the whole earth and all the stars in the sky are for religion's
sake.

I say no man has ever yet been half devout enough,
None has ever yet adored or worship'd half enough,
None has begun to think how divine he himself is, and how
certain the future is.

I say that the real and permanent grandeur of these States must
be their religion,
Otherwise there is no real and permanent grandeur;
(Nor character nor life worthy the name without religion,
Nor land nor man or woman without religion).

8

What are you doing young man?
Are you so earnest, so given up to literature, science, art, amours?
These ostensible realities, politics, points?
Your ambition or business whatever it may be?

It is well—against such I say not a word, I am their poet also,
But behold! such swiftly subside, burnt up for religion's sake,
For not all matter is fuel to heat, impalpable flame, the essential
life of the earth,
Any more than such are to religion.

9

What do you seek so pensive and silent?
What do you need camarado?
Dear son do you think it is love?

Listen, dear son—listen America, daughter or son,
It is a painful thing to love a man or woman to excess, and yet
it satisfies, it is great,

But there is something else very great, it makes the whole
coincide,
It, magnificent, beyond materials, with continuous hands sweeps
and provides for all.

10

Know you, solely to drop in the earth the germs of a greater
religion,
The following chants each for its kind I sing.

My comrade!

For you to share with me two greatnesses, and a third one rising
inclusive and more resplendent,
The greatness of Love and Democracy, and the greatness of
Religion.

Melange mine own, the unseen and the seen,
Mysterious ocean where the streams empty,
Prophetic spirit of materials shifting and flickering around me,
Living beings, identities now doubtless near us in the air that
we know not of,
Contact daily and hourly that will not release me,
These selecting, these in hints demanded of me.

Not he with a daily kiss onward from childhood kissing me,
Has winded and twisted around me that which holds me to him,
Any more than I am held to the heavens and all the spiritual
world.

After what they have done to me, suggesting themes.

O such themes—equalities! O divine average!
Warblings under the sun, usher'd as now, or at noon, or setting,
Strains musical flowing through ages, now reaching hither,
I take to your reckless and composite chords, add to them, and
cheerfully pass them forward.

11

As I have walk'd in Alabama my morning walk,
I have seen where the she-bird the mocking-bird set on her nest
in the briers hatching her brood.

I have seen the he-bird also,
I have paus'd to hear him near at hand inflating his throat and
joyfully singing.

And while I paus'd it came to me that what he really sang for
 was not there only,
 Nor for his mate nor himself only, nor all sent back by the echoes,
 But subtle, clandestine, away beyond,
 A charge transmitted and gift occult for those being born.

12

Democracy! near at hand to you a throat is now inflating itself
 and joyfully singing.

Ma femme! for the brood beyond us and of us.
 For those who belong here and those to come,
 I exultant to be ready for them will now shake out carols stronger
 and haughtier than have ever yet been heard upon earth.

I will make the songs of passion to give them their way,
 And your songs outlaw'd offenders, for I scan you with kindred
 eyes, and carry you with me the same as any.

I will make the true poem of riches.
 To earn for the body and the mind whatever adheres and goes
 forward and is not dropt by death;
 I will effuse egotism and show it underlying all, and I will be
 the bard of personality,
 And I will show of male and female that either is but the equal
 of the other,
 And sexual organs and acts I do you concentrate in me, for I am
 determin'd to tell you with courageous clear voice to prove
 you illustrious,
 And I will show that there is no imperfection in the present, and
 can be none in the future,
 And I will show that whatever happens to anybody it may be
 turn'd to beautiful results,
 And I will show that nothing can happen more beautiful than
 death,
 And I will thread a thread through my poems that time and
 events are compact,
 And that all the things of the universe are perfect miracles, each
 as profound as any.

I will not make poems with reference to parts,
 But I will make poems, songs, thoughts, with reference to en-
 semble,

And I will not sing with reference to a day, but with reference to
all days,
And I will not make a poem nor the least part of a poem but with
reference to the soul,
Because having look'd at the objects of the universe, I find there
is no one nor any particle of one but has reference to the
soul.

13

Was somebody asking to see the soul?
See, your own shape and countenance, persons, substances,
beasts, the trees, the running rivers, the rocks, and sands.

All hold spiritual joys and afterwards loosen them;
How can the real body ever die and be buried?

Of your real body and any man's or woman's real body,
Item for item it will elude the hands of the corpse-cleaners and
pass to fitting spheres,
Carrying what has accrued to it from the moment of birth to the
moment of death.

Not the types set up by the printer return their impression, the
meaning, the main concern,
Any more than a man's substance and life or a woman's substance
and life return in the body and the soul,
Indifferently before death and after death.

Behold, the body includes and is the meaning, the main concern,
and includes and is the soul;
Whoever you are, how superb and how divine is your body, or
any part of it!

14

Whoever you are, to you endless announcements!

Daughter of the lands did you wait for your poet?
Did you wait for one with a flowing mouth and indicative hand?
Toward the male of the States, and toward the female of the
States,
Exulting words, words to Democracy's lands.

Interlink'd, food-yielding lands!
 Land of coal and iron! land of gold! land of cotton, sugar,
 . rice!
 Land of wheat, beef, pork! land of wool and hemp! land of the
 apple and the grape!
 Land of the pastoral plains, the grass-fields of the world! land of
 those sweet-air'd interminable plateaus!
 Land of the herd, the garden, the healthy house of adobie!
 Lands where the north-west Columbia winds, and where the
 south-west Colorado winds!
 Land of the eastern Chesapeake! land of the Delaware!
 Land of Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan!
 Land of the Old Thirteen! Massachusetts land! land of Vermont
 and Connecticut!
 Land of the ocean shores! land of sierras and peaks!
 Land of boatmen and sailors! fishermen's land!
 Inextricable lands! the clutch'd together! the passionate ones!
 The side by side! the elder and younger brothers! the bony-
 limb'd!
 The great women's land! the feminine! the experienced sisters
 and the inexperienced sisters!
 Far breath'd land! Arctic braced! Mexican breez'd! the diverse!
 the compact!
 The Pennsylvanian! the Virginian! the double Carolinian!
 O all and each well-loved by me! my intrepid nations! O I at
 any rate include you all with perfect love!
 I cannot be discharged from you! not from one any sooner than
 another!
 O death! O for all that, I am yet of you unseen this hour with
 irrepressible love,
 Walking New England, a friend, a traveller,
 Splashing my bare feet in the edge of the summer ripples on
 Paumanok's sands,
 Crossing the prairies, dwelling again in Chicago, dwelling in
 every town,
 Observing shows, births, improvements, structures, arts,
 Listening to orators and oratresses in public halls,
 Of and through the States as during life, each man and woman
 my neighbour,
 The Louisianian, the Georgian, as near to me, and I as near to
 him and her,
 The Mississippian and Arkansian yet with me, and I yet with
 any of them,

Yet upon the plains west of the spinal river, yet in my house of adobie,

Yet returning eastward, yet in the Seaside State or in Maryland,

Yet Kanadian cheerily braving the winter, the snow and ice welcome to me,

Yet a true son either of Maine or of the Granite State, or the Narragansett Bay State, or the Empire State,

Yet sailing to other shores to annex the same, yet welcoming every new brother,

Hereby applying these leaves to the new ones from the hour they unite with the old ones,

Coming among the new ones myself to be their companion and equal, coming personally to you now,

Enjoining you to acts, characters, spectacles, with me.

15

With me with firm holding, yet haste, haste on.

For your life adhere to me,

(I may have to be persuaded many times before I consent to give myself really to you, but what of that ?

Must not Nature be persuaded many times ?)

No dainty dolce affettuoso I,

Bearded, sun-burnt, grey-neck'd, forbidding, I have arrived,

To be wrestled with as I pass for the solid prizes of the universe,

For such I afford whoever can persevere to win them.

16

On my way a moment I pause,

Here for you! and here for America!

Still the present I raise aloft, still the future of the States I harbinge glad and sublime,

And for the past I pronounce what the air holds of the red aborigines.

The red aborigines,

Leaving natural breaths, sounds of rain and winds, calls as of birds and animals in the woods, syllabled to us for names,

Okonee, Koosa, Ottawa, Monongahela, Sauk, Natchez, Chatahoochee, Kaqueta, Oronoco,

Wabash, Miami, Saginaw, Chippewa, Oshkosh, Walla-Walla,
 Leaving such to the States they melt, they depart, charging the
 water and the land with names.

17

Expanding and swift, henceforth,
 Elements, breeds, adjustments, turbulent, quick, and audacious,
 A world primal again, vistas of glory incessant and branching,
 A new race dominating previous ones and grander far, with new
 contests, "
 New politics, new literatures and religions, new inventions and
 arts.

These, my voice announcing — I will sleep no more but arise,
 You oceans that have been calm within me! how I feel you,
 fathomless, stirring, preparing unprecedented waves and
 storms.

18

See, steamers steaming through my poems,
 See, in my poems immigrants continually coming and landing,
 See, in arriere, the wigwam, the trail, the hunter's hut, the flat-
 boat, the maize-leaf, the claim, the rude fence, and the
 backwoods village,
 See, on the one side the Western Sea and on the other the
 Eastern Sea, how they advance and retreat upon my poems
 as upon their own shores,
 See, pastures and forests in my poems — see, animals wild and
 tame — see, beyond the Paw, countless herds of buffalo
 feeding on short curly grass,
 See, in my poems, cities, solid, vast, inland, with paved streets,
 with iron and stone edifices, ceaseless vehicles, and com-
 merce.
 See, the many-cylinder'd steam printing-press — see, the electric
 telegraph stretching across the continent,
 See, through Atlantica's depths pulses American Europe reach-
 ing, pulses of Europe duly return'd,
 See, the strong and quick locomotive as it departs, panting,
 blowing the steam-whistle,
 See, ploughmen ploughing farms — see, miners digging mines —
 see, the numberless factories,

See, mechanics busy at their benches with tools—see from among
 them superior judges, philosophers, Presidents, emerge, drest
 in working dresses,
 See lounging through the shops and fields, of the States, no
 well-belov'd, close-held by day and night,
 Hear the loud echoes of my songs there—read the hints come
 at last.

19

•O camerado close! O you and me at last, and us two only.
 O a word to clear one's path ahead endlessly! •
 O something ecstatic and undemonstrable! O music wild!
 O now I triumph—and you shall also; •
 O hand in hand—O wholesome pleasure—O one more desirer
 and lover! •
 O to haste firm holding --to haste, haste on with me.

SONG OF MYSELF

I

I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loaf and invite my soul,
I lean and loaf at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air,
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their
parents the same,

I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never
forgotten,

I harbour for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,
Nature without check with original energy.

2

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes, the shelves are crowded
with perfumes,

I breathe the fragrance myself and know it and like it,
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it.

The atmosphere is not a perfume, it has no taste of the distilla-
tion, it is odourless,

It is for my mouth forever, I am in love with it,
I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and
naked,

I am mad for it to be in contact with me.

The smoke of my own breath,
Echoes, ripples, buzz'd whispers, love-root, silk-thread, crotch,
and vine,

Song of Myself

25

My respiration and inspiration, the beating of my heart, the passing of blood and air through my lungs,
The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and dark-colour'd sea-rocks, and of hay in the barn,
The sound of the belch'd words of my voice loos'd to the eddies of the wind,
A few light kisses, a few embraces, a reaching around of arms,
The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple boughs wag,
The delight alone or in the rush of the streets, or along the fields and hill-sides,
The feeling of health, the full-moon trill, the song of me rising from bed and meeting the sun.

Have you reckon'd a thousand acres much? have you reckon'd the earth much?

Have you practis'd so long to learn to read?

Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of poems?

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems,

You shall possess the good of the earth and sun (there are millions of suns left),

You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes of the dead, nor feed on the spectres in books,

You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me.

You shall listen to all sides and filter them from yourself.

3

I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk of the beginning and the end,

But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

There was never any more inception than there is now,
Nor any more youth or age than there is now,
And will never be any more perfection than there is now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.

Urge and urge and urge,
Always the procreant urge of the world.

Out of the dimness opposite equals advance, always substance
and increase, always sex,
Always a knit of identity, always distinction, always a breed of
life.

To elaborate is no avail, learn'd and unlearn'd feel that it is so.

Suré as the most certain sure, plumb in the uprights, well
entretied, braced in the beams.

Stout as a horse, affectionate, haughty, electrical,
I and this mystery here we stand.

Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is not
my soul.

Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by the seen,
Till that becomes unseen and receives proof in its turn.

Showing the best and dividing it from the worst age vexes age,
Knowing the perfect fitness and equanimity of things, while they
discuss I am silent, and go bathe and admire myself.

Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man
hearty and clean,
Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile, and none shall be
less familiar than the rest

I am satisfied—I see, dance, laugh, sing;
As the hugging and loving bed-fellow sleeps at my side through
the night, and withdraws at the peep of the day with
... stealthy tread,
Leaving me baskets cover'd with white towels swelling the house
with their plenty,
Shall I postpone my acceptation and realisation and scream at
my eyes,
That they turn from gazing after and down the road,
And forthwith cipher and show me to a cent,
Exactly the value of one and exactly the value of two, and
which is ahead?

Trippers and askers surround me,
People I meet, the effect upon me of my early life or the ward
and city I live in, or the nation,

Song of Myself

27

The latest dates, discoveries, inventions, societies, authors old
and new,

My dinner, dress, associates, looks, compliments, dues,
The real or fancied indifference of some man or woman I love,
The sickness of one of my folks or of myself, or ill-doing or loss or
• lack of money, or depressions or exaltations,

Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of doubtful news,
the fitful events;

These come to me days and nights and go from me again,

• But they are not the Me myself.

Apart from the pulling and hauling stands what I am,
Stands amused, complacent, compassionating, idle, unitary,
Looks down, is erect, or bends an arm on an impalpable certain
rest,

Looking with side-curved head curious what will come next,
Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it.

Backward I see in my own days where I sweated through fog
with linguists and contenders,

I have no mockings or arguments, I witness and wait.

5

I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase itself
to you,

And you must not be abased to the other.

Loafe with me on the grass, loose the stop from your throat,
Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not custom or lecture,
not even the best,

Only the lull I like, the hum of your valvèd voice.

I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning,
How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd
over upon me,

And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your
tongue to my bare-stript heart,

And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my
feet.

Swiftly rose and spread around me the peace and knowledge
that pass all the argument of the earth,

And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,

And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,
 And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the
 women my sisters and lovers,
 And that a kelson of the creation is love,
 And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the fields,
 And brown ants in the little wells beneath them,
 And mossy scabs of the worm fence, heap'd stones, elder, mullein,
 and poke-weed.

6

A child said, *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;
 How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any
 more than 'he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green
 stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
 A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,
 Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may
 see and remark, and say *Whose?*

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the
 vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,
 And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,
 Growing among black folks as among white,
 Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I
 receive them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you curling grass,
 It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,
 It may be if I had known them I would have loved them,
 It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon
 out of their mothers' laps,
 And here you are the mothers' laps.

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers,
 Darker than the colourless beards of old men,
 Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues,
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for
nothing.

I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and
women,
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring
taken soon out of their laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere,
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at
the end to arrest it,
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.

All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier,

7

Has any one supposed it lucky to be born?
I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and I
know it.

I pass death with the dying and birth with the new-wash'd
babe, and am not contain'd between my hat and boots,
And peruse manifold objects, no two alike and every one good,
The earth good and the stars good, and their adjuncts all good.

I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an earth,
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal
and fathomless as myself,
(They do not know how immortal, but I know).

Every kind for itself and its own, for me mine male and female,
For me those that have been boys and that love women,
For me the man that is proud and feels how it stings to be
slighted,
For me the sweet-heart and the old maid, for me mothers and
the mothers of mothers,

For me lips that have smiled, eyes that have shed tears,
 For me children and the begetters of children.

Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale nor discarded,
 I see through the broadcloth and gingham whether or no,
 And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and cannot be
 shaken away.

8

The little one sleeps in its cradle,
 I lift the gauze and look a long-time, and silently brush away
 flies with my hand.

The youngster and the red-faced girl turn aside up the bushy
 hill,
 I peeringly view them from the top.

The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of the bedroom,
 I witness the corpse with its dabbled hair, I note where the
 pistol has fallen.

The blab of the pave, tires of carts, sluff of boot-soles, talk of
 the promenaders,
 The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating thumb,
 the clank of the shod horses on the granite floor,
 The snow-sleighs, clinking, shouted jokes, pelts of snow-balls,
 The hurrahs for popular favourites, the fury of rous'd mobs,
 The flap of the curtain'd litter, a sick man inside borne to the
 hospital,
 The meeting of enemies, the sudden oath, the blows and fall,
 The excited crowd, the policeman with his star quickly working
 his passage to the centre of the crowd,
 The impassive stones that receive and return so many echoes,
 What groans of over-fed or half-starv'd who fall sunstruck or
 in fits,
 What exclamations of women taken suddenly who hurry home
 and give birth to babes,
 What living and buried speech is always vibrating here, what
 howls restrain'd by decorum,
 Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous offers made, accept-
 ances, rejections with convex lips,
 I mind them or the show or resonance of them—I come and I
 depart.

The big doors of the country barn stand open and ready,
The dried grass of the harvest-time loads the slow-drawn wagon;
The clear light plays on the brown grey and green intertinged,
The armfuls are pack'd to the sagging snow...

I am there, I help, I came stretch'd atop of the load,
I felt its soft jolts, one leg reclined on the other,
I jump from the cross-beams and seize the clover and timothy,
And roll head over heels and tangle my hair full of wisps.

Alone far in the wilds and mountains I hunt,
Wandering amazed at my own lightness and glee,
In the late afternoon choosing a safe spot to pass the night,
Kindling a fire and broiling the fresh-kill'd game,
Falling asleep on the gather'd leaves with my dog and gun by
my side.

The Yankee clipper is under her sky-sails, she cuts the sparkle
and scurl,
My eyes settle the land, I bend at her prow or shout joyously
from the deck.

The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopt for me,
I tuck'd my trowser-ends in my boots and went and had a good
time;
You should have been with us that day round the chowder-
kettle.

I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air in the far west,
the bride was a red girl,
Her father and his friends sat near cross-legged and dumbly
smoking, they had moccasins to their feet and large thick
blankets hanging from their shoulders,
On a bank lounged the trapper, he was drest mostly in skins,
his luxuriant beard and curls protected his neck, he held
his bride by the hand,
She had long eyelashes, her head was bare, her coarse straight
locks descended upon her voluptuous limbs and reach'd to
her feet.

The runaway slave came to my house and stopt outside,
 I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile,
 Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsy
 and weak,
 And went where he sat on a log and led him in and assured him,
 And brought water and fill'd a tub for his sweated body and
 " bruis'd feet,
 And gave him a room that enter'd from my own, and gave him
 some coarse clean clothes,
 And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his awkwardness;
 And remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and
 ankles;
 He stayed with me a week before he was recuperated and pass'd
 north,
 I had him sit next me at table, my tire-lock lean'd in the corner.

II

Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore,
 Twenty-eight young men and all so friendly;
 Twenty-eight years of womanly life and all so lonesome.

She owns the fine house by the rise of the bank,
 She hides handsome and richly drest aft the blinds of the
 window.

Which of the young men does she like the best?
 Ah, the homeliest of them is beautiful to her.

Where are you off to, lady? for I see you,
 You splash in the water there, yet stay stock still in your room.

Dancing and laughing along the beach came the twenty-ninth
 bather,
 The rest did not see her, but she saw them and loved them.

The beards of the young men glisten'd with wet, it ran from their
 long hair,
 Little streams pass'd all over their bodies.

An unseen hand also pass'd over their bodies,
 It descended tremblingly from their temples and ribs.

Song of Myself

33

The young men float on their backs, their white bellies bulge
to the sun, they do not ask who seizes fast to them,
They do not know who puffs and declines with pendant and
bending arch,
They do not think whom they souse with spray.

12

The butcher-boy puts off his killing-clothes, or sharpens his
knife at the stall in the market,
I loiter enjoying his repartee and his shuffle and break-down.

Blacksmiths with grimed and hairy chests environ the anvil,
Each has his main-sledge, they are all out, there is a great heat
in the fire.

From the cinder-strew'd threshold I follow their movements,
The lithe sheer of their waists plays even with their massive
arms,
Overhand the hammers swing, overhand so slow, overhand so sure,
They do not hasten, each man hits in his place.

13

The negro holds firmly the reins of his four horses, the block
swags underneath on its tied-over chain,
The negro that drives the long dray of the stone-yard, steady
and tall he stands pois'd on one leg on the string-piece,
His blue shirt exposes his ample neck and breast and loosens
over his hip-band,
His glance is calm and commanding, he tosses the slouch of his
hat away from his forehead,
The sun falls on his crispy hair and moustache, falls on the
black of his polish'd and perfect limbs.

I behold the picturesque giant and love him, and I do not stop
there,
I go with the team also.

In me the caresser of life wherever moving, backward as well as
forward sluing,
To niches aside and junior bending, not a person or object
missing,
Absorbing all to myself and for this song.

Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain or halt in the leafy shade,
 what is that you express in your eyes?
 It seems to me more than all the print I have read in my life.

My tread scares the wood-drake and wood-duck on my distant
 and day-long ramble,
 They rise together, they slowly circle around.

I believe in those wing'd purposes,
 And acknowledge red, yellow, white, playing within me,
 And consider green and violet and the tufted crown intentional,
 And do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is not some-
 thing else,
 And the jay in the woods never studied the gamut, yet trills
 pretty well to me,
 And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of me.

14

The wild gander leads his flock through the cool night,
Ya-honk he says, and sounds it down to me like an invitation,
 The pert may suppose it meaningless, but I listening close,
 Find its purpose and place up there toward the wintry sky.

The sharp-hoof'd moose of the north, the cat on the house-sill,
 the chickadee, the prairie-dog,
 The litter of the grunting sow as they tug at her teats,
 The brood of the turkey-hen and she with her half-spread wings,
 I see in them and myself the same old law.

The press of my foot to the earth springs a hundred affections,
 They scorn the best I can do to relate them.

I am enamour'd of growing out-doors,
 Of men that live among cattle or taste of the ocean or woods,
 Of the builders and steerers of ships and the wielders of axes
 and mauls, and the drivers of horses,
 I can eat and sleep with them week in and week out.

What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, ~~easiest~~, is Me,
 Me going in for my chances, spending for vast returns,
 Adorning myself to bestow myself on the first that will take me,
 Not asking the sky to come down to my good will,
 Scattering it freely forever.

15

The pure contralto sings in the organ loft,
The carpenter dresses his plank, the tongue of his foreplane
whistles its wild ascending lisp,
The married and unmarried children ride home to their Thanks-
giving dinner,
The pilot seizes the king-pin, he heaves down with a strong arm,
The mate stands braced in the whale-boat, lance and harpoon
are ready,
The duck-shooter walks by silent and cautious stretches,
The deacons are ordain'd with cross'd hands at the altar,
The spinning-girl retreats and advances to the hum of the big
wheel,
The farmer stops by the bars as he walks on a First-day loafe
and looks at the oats and rye,
The lunatic is carried at last to the asylum a confirm'd case,
(He will never sleep any more as he did in the cot in his mother's
bedroom);
The jour printer with grey head and gaunt jaws works at his
case,
He turns his quid of tobacco while his eyes plurr with the
manuscript;
The malform'd limbs are tied to the surgeon's table,
What is removed drops horribly in a pail;
The quadrone girl is sold at the auction-stand, the drunkard
nods by the bar-room stove,
The machinist rolls up his sleeves, the policeman travels his
beat, the gate-keeper marks who pass,
The young fellow drives the express-wagon (I love him, though
I do not know him);
The half-breed straps on his light boots to compete in the race,
The western turkey-shooting draws old and young, some lean
on their rifles, some sit on logs,
Out from the crowd steps the marksman, takes his position,
levels his piece;
The groups of newly-come immigrants cover the wharf or levee,
As the woolly-pates hot in the sugar-field, the overseer views
them from his saddle,
The bugle calls in the ball-room, the gentlemen run for their
partners, the dancers bow to each other,
The youth lies awake in the cedar-roof'd garret and harks to
the musical rain,

- The Wolverine sets traps on the creek that helps fill the Huron,
The squaw wrapt in her yellow-hemm'd cloth is offering moc-casins and bead-bags for sale,
The connoisseur peers along the exhibition-gallery with half-shut eyes bent sideways,
As the deck-hands make fast the steamboat the plank is thrown for the shore-going passengers,
The young sister holds out the skein while the elder sister winds it off in a ball, and stops now and then for the knots,
The one-year wife is recovering and happy having a week ago borne her first child,
The clean-hair'd Yankee girl works with her sewing-machine or in the factory or mill,
The paving-man leans on his two-handed rammer, the reporter's lead flies swiftly over the note book, the sign-painter is lettering with blue and gold,
The canal boy trots on the tow-path, the book-keeper counts at his desk, the shoemaker waxes his thread,
The conductor beats time for the band and all the performers follow him,
The child is baptized, the convert is making his first professions, The regatta is spread on the bay, the race is begun (how the white sails sparkle!)
The drover watching his drove sings out to them that would stray,
The pedlar sweats with his pack on his back (the purchaser higgling about the odd cent);
• The bride unrumples her white dress, the minute-hand of the clock moves slowly,
The opium-eater declines with rigid head and just-open'd lips,
The prostitute draggles her shawl, her bonnet bobs on her tipsy and pimpled neck,
The crowd laugh at her blackguard oaths, the men jeer and wink to each other,
(Miserable! I do not laugh at your oaths nor jeer you);
The President holding a cabinet council is surrounded by the great Secretaries,
On the piazza walk three matrons stately and friendly with twined arms,
The crew of the fish-smack pack repeated layers of halibut in the hold,

The Missourian crosses the plains toting his wares and his cattle,
As the fare-collector goes through the train he gives notice by
the jingling of loose change,
The floor-men are laying the floor, the tinnerns are tinning the
roof, the masons are calling for mortar,
In single file each shouldering his hod pass onward the labourers;
Seasons pursuing each other the indescribable crowd is gather'd,
it is the fourth of Seventh-month (what salutes of cannon
and small arms)!
Seasons pursuing each other the plougher ploughs, the mower
mows, and the winter-grain falls in the ground;
Off on the lakes the pike-fisher watches and waits by the hole in
the frozen surface,
The stumps stand thick round the clearing, the squatter strikes
deep with his axe,
Flatboatmen make fast towards dusk near the cotton-wood or
pecan-trees,
Coon-seekers go through the regions of the Red river or through
those drain'd by the Tennessee, or through those of the
Arkansas,
Torches shine in the dark that hangs on the Chattahoochee or
Altamahaw,
Patriarchs sit at supper with sons and grandsons and great-
grandsons around them,
In walls of adobie, in canvas tents, rest hunters and trappers
after their day's sport,
The city sleeps and the country sleeps,
The living sleep for their time, the dead sleep for their time,
The old husband sleeps by his wife and the young husband
sleeps by his wife;
And these tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them,
And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,
And of these one and all I weave the song of myself.

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,
Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse and stuff'd with the stuff
that is fine,
One of the Nation of many nations, the smallest the same and
the largest the same,

A Southerner soon as a Northerner, a planter nonchalant and
hospitable down by the Oconee I live,

A Yankee bound my own way ready for trade, my joints the
limberest joints on earth and the sternest joints on
earth,

A Kentuckian walking the vale of the Elkhorn in my deer-skin
leggings, a Louisianian or Georgian,

A boatman over lakes or bays or along coasts, a Hoosier, Badger,
Buckeye;

At home on Kanadian snow-shoes or up in the bush, or with
fishermen off Newfoundland,

At home in the fleet of ice-boats, sailing with the rest and
tacking,

At home on the hills of Vermont or in the woods of Maine, or
the Texan ranch,

Comrade of Californians, comrade of free North-Westerners
(loving their big proportions),

Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen, comrade of all who shake
hands and welcome to drink and meat.

A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfulest,

A novice, beginning yet experient of myriads of seasons,

Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion,

A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,

Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.

I resist anything better than my own diversity,

Breathe the air but leave plenty after me,

And am not stuck up, and am in my place.

“(The moth and the fish-eggs are in their place,

The bright suns I see and the dark suns I cannot see are in
their place,

The palpable is in its place and the impalpable is in its place.)

These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands,
they are not original with me,

If they are not yours as much as mine they are nothing, or next
to nothing,

If they are not the riddle and the untying of the riddle they are
nothing,

If they are not just as close as they are distant they are nothing.

Song of Myself

39

This is the grass that grows wherever the land is and the water is,
This is the common air that bathes the globe.

18

With music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums,
I play not marches for accepted victors only, I play marches
for conquer'd and slain persons.

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?
I also say it is good to fall, battles are lost in the same spirit
in which they are won.

I beat and pound for the dead,
I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest for
them.

Vivas to those who have fail'd!
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!
And to those themselves who sank in the sea!
And to all generals that lost engagements, and all overcome
heroes!
And the numberless unknown heroes equal to the greatest
heroes known!

This is the meal equally set, this the meat for natural hunger,
It is for the wicked just the same as the righteous, I make
appointments with all,
I will not have a single person slighted or left away,
The kept-woman, sponger, thief, are hereby invited,
The heavy-lipp'd slave is invited, the venerealee is invited;
There shall be no difference between them and the rest.

This is the press of a bashful hand, this the float and odour of
hair,
This the touch of my lips to yours, this the murmur of yearning,
This the far-off depth and height reflecting my own face,
This the thoughtful merge of myself, and the outlet again.

Do you guess I have some intricate purpose?
Well I have, for the Fourth-month showers have, and the mica
on the side of a rock has.

Do you take it I would astonish?

Does the daylight astonish? does the early redstart twittering
through the woods?

Do I astonish more than they?

This hour I tell things in confidence,

I might not tell everybody, but I will tell you.

20

Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude;
How is it that I extract strength from the beef I eat?

What is a man anyhow? what am I? what are you?

All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own,
Else it were time lost listening to me.

I do not snivel that snivel the world over,
That months are vacuums and the ground but wallow and filth.

Whinpering and truckling, fold with powders for invalids, con-
formity goes to the fourth-remov'd,
I wear my hat as I please indoors or out.

Why should I pray? why should I venerate and be cere-
monious?

Having pried through the strata, analysed to a hair, counsell'd
with doctors and calculated close,
I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barley-corn
less,
And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.

I know I am solid and sound,
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

I know I am deathless,
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's
compass,

Song of Myself

41

I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt
stick at night.

I know I am august,
I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,
I see that the elementary laws never apologise,
(I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house
by, after all).

I-exist as I am, that is enough,
If no other in the world be aware I sit content,
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware and by far the largest to me, and that is
myself,
And whether I come to my own to-day or in ten thousand or
ten million years,
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can
wait.

My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite,
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time.

21

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,
'The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are
with me,
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate
into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride,
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,
I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?
It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one, and
still pass on.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night,
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.

Press close bare-bosom'd night—press close magnetic nourishing
night!

Night of south winds—night of the large few stars
Still nodding night—mad naked summer night.

Smile O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
Earth of departed sunset—earth of the mountains misty-topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid grey of clouds brighter and clearer for my
sake!

Far-swooping elbow'd earth—rich apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes.

Prodigal, you have given me love—therefore I to you give love!
O unspeakable passionate love.

You sea! I resign myself to you also—I guess what you mean,
I behold from the beach your crooked inviting fingers,
I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me,
We must have a turn together, I undress, hurry me out of sight
of the land,
Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy drowse,
Dash me with amorous wet, I can repay you.

Sea of stretch'd ground-swells,
Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths,
Sea of the brine of life and of unshovel'd yet always-ready
graves,
Howler and scooper of storms, capricious and dainty sea,
I am integral with you, I too am of one phase and of all phases.

Partaker of influx and efflux I, extoller of hate and conciliation,
Extoller of amies and those that sleep in each other's arms.

I am he attesting sympathy,
(Shall I make my list of things in the house and skip the house
that supports them?)

Song of Myself

43

I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness also.

What blurt is this about virtue and about vice?
Evil propels me and reform of evil propels me, I stand indifferent,
My gait is no fault-finder's or rejecter's gait,
I moisten the roots of all that has grown.

Did you fear some scrofula out of the unflagging pregnancy?
Did you guess the celestial laws are yet to be work'd over and rectified?

I find one side a balance and the antipodal side a balance,
Soft doctrine as steady help as stable doctrine,
Thoughts and deeds of the present our rouse and early start.

This minute that comes to me over the past decillions,
There is no better than it and now.

What behaves well in the past or behaves well to-day is not such a wonder,
The wonder is always and always how there can be a mean man or an infidel.

23

Endless unfolding of words of ages!
And mine a word of the modern, the word En-Masse.

A word of the faith that never balks.
Here or henceforward it is all the same to me, I accept Time absolutely.

It alone is without flaw, it alone rounds and completes all,
That mystic baffling wonder alone completes all,

I accept Reality and dare not question it,
Materialism first and last imbuig.

Hurrah for positive science! long live exact demonstration!
Fetch stonecrop mixt with cedar and branches of lilac,
This is the lexicographer, this the chemist, this made a grammar of the old cartouches,

These mariners put the ship through dangerous unknown seas,
This is the geologist, this works with the scalpel, and this is a
mathematician.

Gentlemen, to you the first honours always!
Your facts are useful, and yet they are not my dwelling,
I but enter by them to an area of my dwelling.

Less the reminders of properties told my words,
And more the reminders they of life untold, and of freedom and
extrication,
And make short account of neuters and geldings, and favour
men and women fully equipt,
And beat the gong of revolt, and stop with fugitives and them
that plot and conspire.

24

Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son,
Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking, and breeding,
No sentimentalist, no stander above men and women or apart
from them,
No more modest than immodest.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

Whoever degrades another degrades me,
And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

Through me the affliatus surging and surging, through me the
current and index.

I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy,
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their
counterpart of on the same terms.

Through me many long dumb voices,
Voices of the interminable generations of prisoners and slaves,
Voices of the diseas'd and despairing and of thieves and dwarfs,
Voices of cycles of preparation and accretion,
And of the threads that connect the stars, and of wombs and of
the father-stuff,

And of the rights of them the others are down upon,
Of the deform'd, trivial, flat, foolish, despised,
Fog in the air, beetles rolling balls of dung

Through me forbidden voices,
Voices of sexes and lusts, voices veil'd and I remove the veil,
Voices indecent by me clarified and transfigur'd.

I do not press my fingers across my mouth,
I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the head and heart,
Copulation is no more rank to me than death is.

I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle.

Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch
or am touch'd from,
The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer,
This head more than churches, bibles, and all the creeds.

If I worship one thing more than another it shall be the spread
of my own body, or any part of it,
Translucent mould of me it shall be you!
Shaded ledges and rests it shall be you!
Firm masculine colter it shall be you!
Whatever goes to the tilth of me it shall be you!
You my rich blood! your milky stream pale strippings of my life!
Breast that presses against other breasts it shall be you!
My brain it shall be your occult convolutions!
Root of wash'd sweet-flag! timorous pond-snipe! nest of guarded
duplicate eggs! it shall be you!
Mix'd tussled hay of head, beard, brawn, it shall be you!
Trickling sap of maple, fibre of manly wheat, it shall be you!
Sun so generous it shall be you!
Vapours lighting and shading my face it shall be you!
You sweaty brooks and dews it shall be you!
Winds whose salt-tickling genitals rub against me it shall be you!
Broad muscular fields, branches of live oak, loving lounge in
my winding paths, it shall be you!
Hands I have taken, face I have kiss'd, mortal I have ever
touch'd, it shall be you.

I dote on myself, there is that lot of me and all so luscious,
 Each moment and whatever happens thrills me with joy,
 I cannot tell how my ankles bend, nor whence the cause of my
 faintest wish,
 Nor the cause of the friendship I emit, nor the cause of the
 friendship I take again.

That I walk up my stoop, I pause to consider if it really be,
 A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the
 metaphysics of books.

To behold the day-break!
 The little light fades the immense and diaphanous shadows,
 The air tastes good to my palate.

Hefts of the moving world at innocent gambols silently rising,
 freshly exuding,
 Scooting obliquely high and low.

Something I cannot see puts upward libidinous prongs,
 Seas of bright juice suffuse heaven.

The earth by the sky stayed with, the daily close of their junction,
 The heav'd challenge from the east that moment over my head,
 The mocking taunt, See then whether you shall be master!

25

Dazzling and tremendous, how quick the sun-rise would kill me,
 If I could not now and always send sun-rise out of me.

We also ascend dazzling and tremendous as the sun,
 We found our own, O my soul, in the calm and cool of the day-
 break.

My voice goes after what my eyes cannot reach,
 With the swirl of my tongue I encompass worlds and volumes
 of worlds.

Speech is the twin of my vision, it is unequal to measure itself,
 It provokes me forever, it says sarcastically,
Walt, you contain enough, why don't you let it out then?

Come now I will not be tantalised, you conceive too much of
 articulation,
 Do you not know, O speech, how the buds beneath you are folderl?
 Waiting in gloom, protected by frost,
 The dirt receding before my prophetic screams,
 I underlying causes to balance them at last,
 My knowledge my live parts, it keeping tally with the meaning
 of all things,
 Happiness (which whoever hears me let him or her set out in
 . search of this day).

My final merit I refuse you, I refuse putting from me what I
 really am,
 Encompass worlds, but never try to encompass me,
 I crowd your sleekest and best by simply looking toward you.

Writing and talk do not prove me,
 I carry the plenum of proof and everything else in my face,
 With the hush of my lips I wholly confound the sceptic.

26

Now I will do nothing but listen,
 To accrue what I hear into this song, to let sounds contribute
 toward it.

I hear bravuras of birds, hustle of growing wheat, gossip of
 flames, clack of sticks, cooking my meals,
 I hear the sound I love, the sound of the human voice,
 I hear all sounds running together, combined, fused, or following,
 Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city, sounds of the
 day and night,
 Talkative young ones to those that like them, the loud laugh
 of work-people at their meals,
 The angry base of disjointed friendship, the faint tones of the
 sick,
 The judge with hands tight to the desk, his pallid lips pro-
 nouncing a death-sentence,
 The heave'e'yo of stevedores unlading ships by the wharves,
 the refrain of the anchor-lifters,
 The ring of alarm-bells, the cry of fire, the whirr of swift-streak-
 ing engines and hose-carts with premonitory tinkles and
 colour'd lights,

The steam-whistle, the solid roll of the train of approaching
cars,
The slow march play'd at the head of the 'association marching
two and two
(They go to guard some corpse, the flag-tops are draped with
black muslin).

I hear the violoncello ('tis the young man's heart's complaint),
I hear the key'd cornet, it glides quickly in through my ears,
It shakes mad-sweet pangs through my belly and breast.

I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera,
Ah, this indeed is music--this suits me.

A tenor large and fresh as the creation fills me,
The orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me full.

I hear the train'd soprano (what work with hers is this?)
The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies,
It wrenches such ardours from me I did not know I possess'd
them,
It sails me, I dab with bare feet, they are lick'd by the indolent
waves,
I am cut by bitter and angry hail, I lose my breath,
Steep'd amid honey'd morphine, my windpipe throttled in
fakes of death,
At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles,
And that we call Being.

27

To be in any form, what is that?
(Round and round we go, all of us, and ever come back thither),
If nothing lay more develop'd the quahaug in its callous shell
were enough.

Mine is no callous shell,
I have instant conductors all over me whether I pass or stop,
They seize every object and lead it harmlessly through me.

I merely stir, press, feel with my fingers, and am happy,
To touch my person to some one else's is about as much as I can
stand.

28

Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity,
Flames and ether making a rush for my veins,
Treacherous tip of me reaching and crowding to help them,
My flesh and blood playing out lightning to strike what is hardly
different from myself,
On all sides prurient provokers stiffening my limbs,
Straining the udder of my heart for its withheld drip,
Behaving licentious toward me, taking no denial,
Depriving me of my best as for a purpose,
Unbuttoning my clothes, holding me by the bare waist,
Deluding my confusion with the calm of the sunlight and pasture-fields,
Immodestly sliding the fellow-senses away,
They bribed to swap off with touch and go and graze at the
edges of me,
No consideration, no regard for my draining strength or my
anger,
Fetching the rest of the herd around to enjoy them a while,
Then all uniting to stand on a headland and worry me.

The sentries desert every other part of me,
They have left me helpless to a red marauder,
They all come to the headland to witness and assist against me.

I am given up by traitors,
I talk wildly, I have lost my wits, I and nobody else am the
greatest traitor,
I went myself first to the headland, my own hands carried me
there.

You villain touch! what are you doing? my breath is tight in
its throat,
Unclench your floodgates, you are too much for me.

29

Blind loving wrestling touch, sheath'd, hooded, sharp-tooth'd
touch!
Did it make you ache so, leaving me?

Parting track'd by arriving, perpetual payment of perpetual loan,
Rich showering rain, and recompense richer afterward.

Sprouts take and accumulate, stand by the curb prolific and
vital,
Landscapes projected masculine, full-sized and golden.

30

All truths wait in all things,
They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it,
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon,
The insignificant is as big to me as any,
(What is less or more than a touch?)

Logic and sermons never convince,
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.

"
(Only what proves itself to every man and woman is so,
Only what nobody denies is so.)

A minute and a drop of me settle my brain,
I believe the soggy chols shall become lovers and lamps,
And a compend of compends is the meat of a man or woman,
And a surfeit and flower there is the feeling they have for each
other,
And they are to branch boundlessly out of that lesson until it
becomes omnific,
And until one and all shall delight us, and we them.

31

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the
stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the
egg of the wren,
And the tree-load is a chef-d'œuvre for the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlours of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.

I find I incorporate gneiss, coal, long-threaded moss, fruits,
grains, esculent roots.
And am stucco'd with quadrupeds and birds all over,
And have distanced what is behind me for good reasons,
But call anything back again when I desire it.

Song of Myself

51

In vain the speeding or shyness,
In vain the plutonic rocks send their old heat against my
 approach,
In vain the mastodon retreats beneath its own powder'd bones,
In vain objects stand leagues off and assume manifold shapes,
In vain the ocean settling in hollows and the great monsters
 lying low,
In vain the buzzard houses herself with the sky,
In vain the snake slides through the creepers and logs,
In vain the elk takes to the inner passes of the woods,
In vain the razor-bill'd auk sails far north to Labrador,
I follow quickly, I ascend to the nest in the fissure of the cliff.

32

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and
 self-contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of
 owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands
 of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

So they show their relations to me and I accept them,
They bring me tokens of myself, they evince them plainly in
 their possession.

I wonder where they get those tokens,
Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently drop them?
Myself moving forward then and now and forever,
Gathering and showing more always and with velocity,
Infinite and omnigenous, and the like of these among them,
Not too exclusive toward the reachers of my remembrancers,
Picking out here one that I love, and now go with him on
 brotherly terms.

A gigantic beauty of a stallion, fresh and responsive to my
 caresses,
Head high in the forehead, wide between the ears,

Limbs glossy and supple, tail dusting the ground,
Eyes full of sparkling wickedness, ears finely cut, flexibly
moving.

His nostrils dilate as my heels embrace him,
His well-built limbs tremble with pleasure as we race around
and return.

I but use you a minute, then I resign you, stallion,
Why do I need your paces when I myself out-gallop them?
Even as I stand or sit passing faster than you.

32

Space and Time! now I see it is true, what I guess'd at,
What I guess'd when I loaf'd on the grass,
What I guess'd while I lay alone in my bed,
And again as I walk'd the beach under the paling stars of the
morning.

My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in sea-gaps,
I skirt sierras, my palms cover continents,
I am afoot with my vision.

By the city's quadrangular houses—in log huts, camping with
lumbermen,
Along the ruts of the turnpike, along the dry gulch and rivulet
bed,
Weeding my onion-patch or hoeing rows of carrots and parsnips,
crossing savannas, trailing in forests,
Prospecting, gold-digging, girdling the trees of a new purchase,
Scorch'd ankle-deep by the hot sand, hauling my boat down the
shallow river,
Where the panther walks to and fro on a limb overhead, where
the buck turns furiously at the hunter,
Where the rattlesnake suns his flabby length on a rock, where the
otter is feeding on fish,
Where the alligator in his tough pimples sleeps by the bayou,
Where the black bear is searching for roots or honey, where the
beaver pats the mud with his paddle-shaped tail;
Over the growing sugar, over the yellow-flower'd cotton plant,
over the rice in its low moist field,
Over the sharp-peak'd farm house, with its scallop'd scum and
slender shoots from the gutters,

Over the western persimmon, over the long-leav'd corn, over
the delicate blue-flower flax,
Over the white and brown buckwheat, a hummer and buzzer
there with the rest,
Over the dusky green of the rye as it ripples and shades in the
breeze;
Scaling mountains, pulling myself cautiously up, holding on
by low scragged limbs,
Walking the path worn in the grass and beat through the leaves
of the brush,
Where the quail is whistling betwixt the woods and the wheat-
lot,
Where the bat flies in the Seventh-month eve, where the great
goldbug drops through the dark,
Where the brook puts out of the roots of the old tree and flows
to the meadow,
Where cattle stand and shake away flies with the tremulous
shuddering of their hides,
Where the cheese-cloth hangs in the kitchen, where andirons
straddle the hearth-slab, where cobwebs fall in festoons
from the rafters;
Where trip-hammers crash, where the press is whirling its
cylinders,
Wherever the human heart beats with terrible throes under its
ribs,
Where the pear-shaped balloon is floating aloft (floating in it
myself and looking composedly down),
Where the life-car is drawn on the slip-noose, where the heat
hatches pale-green eggs in the dented sand,
Where the she-whale swims with her calf and never forsakes it,
Where the steamship trails hind-ways its long pennant of smoke,
Where the fin of the shark cuts like a black chip out of the water,
Where the half-burn'd brig is riding on unknown currents,
Where shells grow to her sunny deck, where the dead are corrupt-
ing below;
Where the dense-starr'd flag is borne at the head of the regi-
ments,
Approaching Manhattan up by the long-stretching island,
Under Niagara, the cataract falling like a veil over my counten-
ance,
Upon a door-step, upon the horse-block of hard wood outside,
Upon the race-course, or enjoying picnics or jigs or a good game
of base-ball,

At he-festivals, with blackguard gibes, ironical licence, bull-
dances, drinking, laughter,
At the cider-mill tasting the sweets of the brown mash, sucking
the juice through a straw,
At apple-peelings wanting kisses for all the red fruit I find,
At musters, beach-parties, friendly bees, huskings, hotse-
raisings;
Where the mocking-bird sounds his delicious gurgles; cackles,
screams, weeps,
Where the hayrick stands in the barnyard, where the dry-
stalks are scatter'd, where the brood-cow waits in the hovel,
Where the bull advances to do his masculine work, where the
stud to the mare, where the cock is treading the hen,
Where the heifers browse, where geese nip their food with short
jerks, "
Where sun-down shadows lengthen over the limitless and lone-
some prairie,
Where herds of buffalo make a crawling spread of the square
miles far and near,
Where the humming-bird shimmers, where the neck of the long-
lived swan is curving and winding,
Where the laughing-gull scoots by the shore, where she laughs
her near-human laugh,
Where bee-hives range on a grey bench in the garden half hid by
the high weeds,
Where band-neck'd partridges roost in a ring on the ground
with their heads out,
Where burial coaches enter the arch'd gates of a cemetery,
Where winter wolves bark amid wastes of snow and icied
trees,
Where the yellow-crown'd heron comes to the edge of the marsh
at night and feeds upon small crabs,
Where the splash of swimmers and divers cools the warm noon,
Where the katy-did works her chromatic reed on the walnut-tree
over the well,
Through patches of citrons and cucumbers with silver-wired
leaves,
Through the salt-lick or orange glade, or under conical firs,
Through the gymnasium, through the curtain'd saloon, through
the office or public hall;
Pleas'd with the native and pleas'd with the foreign, pleas'd
with the new and old,
Pleas'd with the homely woman as well as the handsome,

Song of Myself

55

Pleas'd with the quakeress as she puts off her bonnet and talks melodiously,

Pleas'd with the tune of the choir of the whitewash'd church.

Pleas'd with the earnest words of the sweating Methodist preacher, impress'd seriously at the camp-meeting;

Looking in at the shop-windows of Broadway the whole forenoon, flatt'ng the flesh of my nose on the thick plate glass,

Wandering the same afternoon with my face turned up to the clouds, or down a lane or along the beach,

My right and left arms round the sides of two friends, and I in the middle;

Coming home with the silent and dark-check'd bush-boy (behind me he rides at the drape of the day),

Far from the settlements studying the print of animals' feet, or the moccasin print,

By the cot in the hospital reaching lemonade to a feverish patient, Nigh the coffin'd corpse when all is still, examining with a candle;

Voyaging to every port to dicker and adventure,

Hurrying with the modern crowd as eager and fickle as any,

Hot toward one I hate, ready in my madness to knife him,

Solitary at midnight in my back yard, my thoughts gone from me a long while,

Walking the old hills of Judæa with the beautiful gentle God by my side,

Speeding through space, speeding through heaven and the stars, Speeding amid the seven satellites and the broad ring, and the diameter of eighty thousand miles,

Speeding with tail'd meteors, throwing fire-balls like the rest, Carrying the crescent child that carries its own full mother in its belly,

Storming, enjoying, planning, loving, cautioning,

Backing and filling, appearing and disappearing,

I tread day and night such roads.

I visit the orchards of spheres and look at the product,

And look at quintillions ripen'd and look at quintillions green,

I fly those flights of a fluid and swallowing soul,

My course runs below the soundings of plummets,

I help myself to material and immaterial,

No guard can shut me off, no law prevent me.

I anchor my ship for a little while only,
My messengers continually cruise away or bring their returns
to me.

I go hunting polar furs and the seal, leaping chasms with a pike-
pointed staff, clinging to topples of brittle and blue.

I ascend to the foretruck.

I take my place late at night in the crow's-nest,
We sail the arctic sea, it is plenty light enough,
Through the clear atmosphere I stretch around on the wonderful
beauty,

The enormous masses of ice pass me and I pass them, the scenery
is plain in all directions,

The white-topped mountains show in the distance, I fling out my
fancies toward them,

We are approaching some great battle-field in which we are soon
to be engaged,

We pass the colossal outposts of the encampment, we pass with
still feet and caution,

Or we are entering by the suburbs some vast and ruin'd city,
The blocks and fallen architecture more than all the living cities
of the globe.

I am a free companion, I bivouac by invading watchfires,
I turn the bridegroom out of bed and stay with the bride myself,
I tighten her all night to my thighs and lips.

My voice is the wife's voice, the screech by the rail of the stairs,
They fetch my man's body up dripping and drowned.

I understand the large hearts of heroes,
The courage of present times and all times,
How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the
steamship, and Death chasing it up and down the storm,
How he knuckled tight and gave not back an inch, and was
faithful of days and faithful of nights,
And chalked in large letters on a board, *Be of good cheer, we will
not desert you ;*
How he follow'd with them and tack'd with them three days
and would not give it up,
How he saved the drifting company at last,
How the lank loose-gown'd women look'd when hoated from the
side of their prepared graves,

How the silent old-faced infants and the lifted sick, and the
sharp-lipp'd unshaved men;
All this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it becomes mine,
I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.

The disdain and calmness of martyrs,
The mother of old, condemn'd for a witch, burnt with dry wood,
her children gazing on,
The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence,
blowing, cover'd with sweat,
The twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck, the mur-
derous buckshot and the bullets,
All these I feel or am.

I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs,
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marks-
men,
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the
ooze of my skin,
I fall on the weeds and stones,
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,
Taunt my dizzy ears and beat me violently over the head with
whip-stocks.

Agonies are one of my changes of garments,
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become
the wounded person,
My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

I am the mash'd fireman with breast-bone broken,
Tumbling walls buried me in their débris,
Heat and smoke I inspired, I heard the yelling shouts of my
comrades,
I heard the distant click of their picks and shovels,
They have clear'd the beams away, they tenderly lift me
forth.

I lie in the night air in my red shirt, the pervading hush is for
my sake,
Painless after all I lie exhausted but not so unhappy,
White and beautiful are the faces around me, the heads are
bared of their fire-caps,
The kneeling crowd fades with the light of the torches.

Distant and dead resuscitate,
 They show as the dial or move as the hands of me, I am the
 clock myself.

I am an old artilleryist, I tell of my fort's bombardment,
 I am there again.

Again the long roll of the drummers,
 Again the attacking cannon, mortars,
 Again to my listening ears the cannon responsive.

I take part, I see and hear the whole,
 The cries, curses, roar, the plaudits for well-aim'd shots,
 The ambulanza slowly passing trailing its red drip,
 Workmen searching after damages, making indispensable
 repairs,
 The fall of grenades through the rent roof, the fan-shaped
 explosion,
 The whizz of limbs, heads, stone, wood, iron, high in the air.

Again gurgles the mouth of my dying general, he furiously
 waves with his hand,
 He gasps through the clot, *Mind not me—mind—the entrench-
 ments,*

34

Now I tell what I knew in Texas in my early youth,
 (I tell not the fall of Alamo,
 Not one escaped to tell the fall of Alamo,
 The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo),
 'Tis the tale of the murder in cold blood of four hundred and
 twelve young men.

Retreating they had formed in a hollow square with their
 baggage for breastworks,
 Nine hundred lives out of the surrounding enemy's, nine times
 their number, was the price they took in advance,
 Their colonel was wounded and their ammunition gone,
 They treated for an honourable capitulation, receiv'd writing
 and seal, gave up their arms and march'd back prisoners
 of war.

They were the glory of the race of rangers,
 Matchless with horse, rifle, song, supper, courtship,

Large, turbulent, generous, handsome, proud, and affectionate,
Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free costume of hunters,
Not a single one over thirty years of age.

The second first-day morning they were brought out in squads
• and massacred, it was beautiful early summer,
The work commenced about five o'clock and was over by eight.

None obey'd the command to kneel,
Some made a mad and helpless rush, some 'stood stark and
straight,
A few fell at once, shot in the temple or heart, the living and dead
lay together,
The maim'd and mangled dug in the dirt, the new-comers saw
them there,
Some half-kill'd attempted to crawl away,
These were despatch'd with bayonets or batter'd with the
blunts of muskets,
A youth not seventeen years old seized his assassin till two more
came to release him,
The three were all torn and cover'd with the boy's blood.

At eleven o'clock began the burning of the bodies;
That is the tale of the murder of the four hundred and twelve
young men.

35

Would you hear of an old-time sea-fight?
Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars?
List to the yarn, as my grandmother's father the sailor told it
to me.

Our foe was no skulk in his ship I tell you (said he),
His was the surly English pluck, and there is no tougher or
truer, and never was, and never will be;
Along the lower'd eve he came horribly raking us.

We closed with him, the yards entangled, the cannon touch'd,
My captain lash'd fast with his own hands.

We had receiv'd some eighteen pound shots under the water,
On our lower-gun-deck two large pieces had burst at the first
fire, killing all around and blowing up overhead.

Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark,
Ten o'clock at night, the full moon well up, our leaks on the gain,
and five feet of water reported,
The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the after-
hold to give them a chance for themselves.

The transit to and from the magazine is now stopt by the sen-
tinels,
They see so many strange faces they do not know whom to
trust.

Our frigate takes fire,
The other asks if we demand quarter?
If our colours are struck and the fighting done?

Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice of my little captain,
We have not struck, he composedly cries, *we have just begun our*
part of the fighting

Only three guns are in use,
One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy's main-
mast,
Two well serv'd with grape and canister silence his musketry
and clear his decks.

The tops alone second the fire of this little battery, especially the
main-top,
They hold out bravely during the whole of the action.

Not a moment's cease,
The leaks gain fast on the pumps, the fire rats toward the
powder-magazine.

One of the pumps has been shot away, it is generally thought
we are sinking.

Serene stands the little captain,
He is not hurried, his voice is neither high nor low,
His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lanterns.

Toward twelve there in the beams of the moon they surrender
to us.

36

Stretch'd and still lies the midnight,
Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the darkness,
Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking, preparations to pass to
the one we have conquer'd,
The captain on the quarter-deck coldly giving his orders through
a countenance white as a sheet,
Near by the corpse of the child that serv'd in the cabin,
The dead face of an old salt with long white hair and carefully
curl'd whiskers,
The flames spite of all that can be done flickering aloft and
below,
The husky voices of the two or three officers yet fit for duty..
Formless stacks of bodies and bodies by themselves, dabs of
flesh upon the masts and spars,
Cut of cordage, dangle of rigging, slight shock of the soothe of
waves,
Black and impassive guns, litter of powder-parcels, strong scent,
A few large stars overhead, silent and mournful shining,
Delicate snuffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy grass and fields by
the shore, death-messages given in charge to survivors,
The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnawing teeth of his saw,
Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild scream, and
long, dull, tapering groan.
These so, these irretrievable.

37

You laggards there on guard! look to your arms!
In at the conquer'd doors they crowd! I am possess'd!
Embody all presences outlaw'd or suffering,
See myself in prison shaped like another man,
And feel the dull uninterrupted pain.

For me the keepers of convicts shoulder their carbines and keep
watch,
It is I let out in the morning and barr'd at night.

Not a mutineer walks handcuff'd to jail but I am handcuff'd to
him and walk by his side,
(I am less the jolly one there, and more the silent one with sweat
on my twitching lips).

Not a youngster is taken for larceny but I go up too, and am
tried and sentenced.

Not a cholera patient lies at the last gasp but I also lie at the
last gasp,
My face is ash-colour'd, my sinews gnarl, away from me people
• retreat.

Askers embody themselves in me and I am embodied in them,
I project my hat, sit shame-faced, and beg.

38

Enough! enough! enough!
Somehow I have been stunn'd. Stand back!
Give me a little time beyond my cuff'd head, slumbers, dreams,
gaping,
I discover myself on the verge of a usual mistake.

That I could forget the mockers and insults!
That I could forget the trickling tears and the blows of the
bludgeons and hammers!
That I could look with a separate look on my own crucifixion and
bloody crowning.

I remember now,
I resume the overstayed fraction,
The grave of rock multiplies what has been confided to it, or to
any graves,
Corpses rise, gashes heal, fastenings roll from me.

I troop forth replenish'd with supreme power, one of an average
unending procession,
Inland and sea-coast we go, and pass all boundary lines,
Our swift ordinances on their way over the whole earth,
The blossoms we wear in our hats the growth of thousands of
years.

Eleves, I salute you! come forward!
Continue your annotations, continue your questionings.

39

The friendly and flowing savage, who is he?
Is he waiting for civilisation, or past it and mastering it?

Is he some Southwesterner rais'd out-doors? is he Kanadian?
Is he from the Mississippi country? Iowa, Oregon, California?
The mountains? prairie-life, bush-life? or sailor from the sea?

Wherever he goes men and women accept and desire him,
They desire he should like them, touch them, speak to them,
stay with them.

Behaviour lawless as snow-flakes, words simple as grass, un-
comb'd head, laughter, and naiveté,
Slow-stepping feet, common features, common modes and
emanations,
They descend in new forms from the tips of his fingers,
They are wafted with the odour of his body or breath, they fly
out of the glance of his eyes.

40

Faunt of the sunshine, I need not your bask-- lie over!
You light surfaces only, I force surfaces and depths also.

Earth! you seem to look for something at my hands,
Say, old top-knot, what do you want?

Man or woman, I might tell how I like you, but cannot,
And might tell what it is in me and what it is in you, but
cannot,
And might tell that pining I have, that pulse of my nights and
days.

Behold I do not give lectures or a little charity,
When I give I give myself.

You there, impotent, loose in the knees,
Open your scarf'd chops till I blow grit within you,
Spread your palms and lift the flaps of your pockets,
I am not to be denied, I compel, I have stores plenty and to
spare,
And anything I have I bestow.

I do not ask who you are, that is not important to me,
You can do nothing and be nothing but what I will infold
you.

To cotton-field drudge or cleaner of privies I lean,
On his right cheek I put the family kiss,
And in my soul I swear I never will deny him.

On women fit for conception I start bigger and nimbler babes,
(This day I am jetting the stuff of far more arrogant republics).

To any one dying, thither I speed and twist the knob of the door,
Turn the bed-clothes toward the foot of the bed,
Let the physician and the priest go home.

I seize the descending man and raise him with resistless will,
O despairer, here is my neck,
By God, you shall not go down! hang your whole weight upon
me.

I dilate you with tremendous breath, I buoy you up,
Every room of the house do I fill with an arm'd force,
Lovers of me, bafilers of graves.

Sleep—I and they keep guard all night,
Not doubt, not decease shall dare to lay finger upon you,
I have embraced you, and henceforth possess you to myself,
And when you rise in the morning you will find what I tell you
is so.

41

I am he bringing help for the sick as they pant on their backs,
And for strong upright men I bring yet more needed help.

I heard what was said of the universe,
Heard it and heard it of several thousand years;
It is middling well as far as it goes—but is that all?

Magnifying and applying come I,
Outbidding at the start the old cautious hucksters,
Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah,
Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his grandson,
Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,
In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf, the
crucifix engraved,
With Odin and the hideous-faced Mexitli and every idol and
image,

Taking them all for what they are worth and not a cent more,
 Admitting they were alive and did the work of their days,
 (They bore mites as for unfedg'd birds who have now to rise and
 fly and sing for themselves),

Accepting the rough deific sketches to fill out better in myself,
 bestowing them freely on each man and woman I see,

Discovering as much or more in a framer framing a house,

Putting higher claims for him there with his roll'd-up sleeves
 driving the mallet and chisel,

Not objecting to special revelations, considering a curl of smoke
 or a hair on the back of my hand just as curious as any
 revelation,

Lads ahold of fire-engines and hook-and-ladder ropes no less to
 me than the gods of the antique wars,

Minding their voices peal through the crash of destruction,

Their brawny limbs passing safe over charr'd laths, their white
 foreheads whole and unhurt out of the flames,

By the mechanic's wife with her babe at her nipple interceding
 for every person born,

Three scythes at harvest whizzing in a row from three lusty
 angels with shirts bagg'd out at their waists,

The snag-tooth'd hostler with red hair redeeming sins past and
 to come,

Selling all he possesses, travelling on foot to fee lawyers for his
 brother and sit by him while he is tried for forgery;

What was strewn in the amplest strewing the square rod about
 me, and not filling the square rod then,

The bull and the bug never worshipp'd half enough,

Dung and dirt more admirable than was dream'd,

The supernatural of no account, myself waiting my time to be
 one of the supremes,

The day getting ready for me when I shall do as much good as
 the best, and be as prodigious;

By my life-lumps! becoming already a creator,

Putting myself here and now to the ambush'd womb of the
 shadows.

A call in the midst of the crowd,
 My own voice, orotund, sweeping, and final.

Come, my children,
 Come, my boys and girls, my women, household and intimates,

Now the performer launches his nerve, he has pass'd his prelude
on the reeds within.

Easily written loose-finger'd chords—I feel the thrum of your
climax and close.

My head slues round on my neck,
Music rolls, but not from the organ,
Folks are around me, but they are no household of mine.

Ever the hard unsunk ground,
Ever the eaters and drinkers, ever the upward and downward
sun, ever the air and the ceaseless tides,
Ever myself and my neighbours, refreshing, wicked, real,
Ever the old inexplicable query, ever that thorn'd thumb, that
breath of itches and thirsts,
Ever the vexer's hoot ! hoot ! till we find where the sly one hides
and bring him forth,
Ever love, ever the sobbing liquid of life,
Ever the bandage under the chin, ever the trestles of death.

Here and there with dimes on the eyes walking,
To feed the greed of the belly the brains liberally spooning,
Tickets buying, taking, selling, but in to the feast never once
going,
Many sweating, ploughing, thrashing, and then the chaff for
payment receiving,
A few idly owning, and they the wheat continually claiming.

This is the city and I am one of the citizens,
Whatever interests the rest interests me, politics, wars, markets,
newspapers, schools,
The mayor and councils, banks, tariffs, steamships, factories,
stocks, stores, real estate, and personal estate.

The little plentiful mannikins skipping around in collars and
tail'd coats,
I am aware who they are (they are positively not worms or fleas),
I acknowledge the duplicates of myself, the weakest and
shallowest is deathless with me,
What I do and say the same waits for them,
Every thought that flounders in me the same flounders in them.

I know perfectly well my own egotism,
 Know my omnivorous lines and must not write any less,
 And would fetch you, whoever you are, flush with myself.

Not words of routine this song of mine,
 But abruptly to question, to leap beyond yet nearer bring;
 This printed and bound book— but the printer and the printing-
 office boy?

The well-taken photographs—but your wife or friend close and
 solid in your arms?

The black ship mail'd with iron, her mighty guns in her turrets—
 but the pluck of the captain and engineers?

In the houses the dishes and fare and furniture—but the host
 and hostess, and the look out of their eyes?

The sky up there— yet here or next door, or across the way?

The saints and sages in history—but you yourself?

Sermons, creeds, theology—but the fathomless human brain,
 And what is reason? and what is love? and what is life?

43

I do not despise you priests, all time, the world over,
 My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths,
 Enclosing worship ancient and modern and all between ancient
 and modern,

Believing I shall come again upon the earth after five thousand
 years,

Waiting responses from oracles, honouring the gods, saluting
 the sun,

Making a fetish of the first rock or stump, powowing with sticks
 in the circle of obis,

Helping the llama or brahmin as he trims the lamps of the
 idols,

Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic procession, rapt and
 austere in the woods a gymnosophist,

Drinking mead from the skull-cup, to Shastas and Vedas
 admirant, minding the Koran,

Walking the teokallis, spotted with gore from the stone and
 knife, beating the serpent-skin drum,

Accepting the Gospels, accepting him that was crucified, knowing
 assuredly that he is divine,

To the mass kneeling or the puritan's prayer rising, or sitting
 patiently in a pew,

Ranting and frothing in my insane crisis, or waiting dead-like
till my spirit arouses me,
Looking forth on pavement and land, or outside of pavement
and land,
Belonging to the winders of the circuit of circuits.

One of that centripetal and centrifugal gang I turn and talk like
a man leaving charges before a journey.

Down-hearted doubters dull and excluded,
Frivolous, sullen, moping, angry, affected, dishearten'd, athe-
istical;
I know every one of you, I know the sea of torment, doubt,
despair, and unbelief.

How the flukes splash!
How they contort rapid as lightning, with spasms and spouts of
blood!

Be at peace bloody flukes of doubters and sullen mopers,
I take my place among you as much as among any,
The past is the push of you, me, all, precisely the same,
And what is yet untried and afterward is for you, me, all,
precisely the same.

I do not know what is untried and afterward,
But I know it will in its turn prove sufficient, and cannot fail.

Each who passes is consider'd, each who stops is consider'd, not
a single one can it fail.

It cannot fail the young man who died and was buried,
Nor the young woman who died and was put by his side,
Nor the little child that peep'd in at the door, and then drew
back and was never seen again,
Nor the old man who has lived without purpose, and feels it with
bitterness worse than gall,
Nor him in the poor house tubercled by rum and the bad dis-
order,
Nor the numberless slaughter'd and wreck'd, nor the brutish
koboo call'd the ordure of humanity,
Nor the sacs merely floating with open mouths for food to slip in,
Nor anything in the earth, or down in the oldest graves of the
earth,

Nor anything in the myriads of spheres, nor the myriads of
myriads that inhabit them,
Nor the present, nor the least wisp that is known,

44

It is time to explain myself—let us stand up.

What is known I strip away,
I launch all men and women forward with me into the Unknown.

The clock indicates the moment—but what does eternity
indicate?

We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters and summers,
There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead of them.

Births have brought us richness and variety,
And other births will bring us richness and variety.

I do not call one greater and one smaller,
That which fills its period and place is equal to any.

Were mankind murderous or jealous upon you, my brother, my
sister?

I am sorry for you, they are not murderous or jealous upon me,
All has been gentle with me, I keep no account with lamentation,
(What have I to do with lamentation?)

I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an encloser of things
to be.

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs,
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches between the
steps,
All below duly travell'd, and still I mount and mount.

Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me,
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I know I was even there,
I waited unseen and always, and slept through the lethargic
mist,
And took my time, and took no hurt from the fetid carbon.

Long I was hugg'd close—long and long.

Immense have been the preparations for me,
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boat-
men,
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings,
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

Before I was born out of my mother generations guided me,
My embryo has never been torpid, nothing could overlay it.

For it the nebula cohered to an orb,
The long slow strata piled to rest it on,
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,
Monstrous saurians transported it in their mouths and deposited
it with care.

All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete and delight
me,
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

45

O span of youth! ever-push'd elasticity!
O manhood, balanced, florid, and full.

My lovers suffocate me,
Crowding my lips, thick in the pores of my skin,
Jostling me through streets and public halls, coming naked to
me at night,
Crying by day *Ahoy!* from the rocks of the river, swinging and
chirping over my head,
Calling my name from flower-beds, vines, tangled underbrush,
Lighting on every moment of my life,
Bussing my body with soft balsamic bysses,
Noiselessly passing handfuls out of their hearts and giving them
to be mine.

Old age superbly rising! O welcome, ineffable grace of dying
days!

Every condition promulges not only itself, it promulges what
grows after and out of itself,
And the dark hush promulges as much as any.

Song of Myself

71

I open my scuttle at night and see the far-sprinkled systems,
And all I see multiplied as high as I can cipher edge but the rim
of the farther systems.

Wider and wider they spread, expanding, always expanding,
Outward and outward and for ever outward.

My sun has his sun and around him obediently wheels,
He joins with his partners a group of superior circuit,
And greater sets follow, making specks of the greatest inside
them.

There is no stoppage and never can be stoppage,
If I, you, and the worlds, and all beneath or upon their surfaces,
were this moment reduced back to a pallid float, it would
not avail in the long run,
We should surely bring up again where we now stand,
And surely go as much farther, and then farther and farther.

A few quadrillions of eras, a few octillions of cubic leagues, do
not hazard the span or make it impatient,
They are but parts, anything is but a part.

See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that,
Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that.

My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain,
The Lord will be there and wait till I come on perfect
terms,
The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine will be there.

46

I know I have the best of time and space, and was never measured
and never will be measured.

I tramp a perpetual journey (come listen all!)
My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes, and a staff cut from
the woods,
No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair,
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy,
I lead no man to a dinner-table, library, exchange,
But each man and each woman of you I lead upon a knoll,

My left hand hooking you round the waist,
My right hand pointing to landscapes of continents and the
public road.

Not I, not any one else can travel that road for you,
You must travel it for yourself.

It is not far, it is within reach,
Perhaps you have been on it since you were born and did not
know,
Perhaps it is everywhere on water and on land.

Shoulder your duds, dear son, and I will mine, and let us hasten
forth,
Wonderful cities and free nations we shall fetch as we go.

If you tire, give me both burdens, and rest the chuff of your hand
on my hip,
And in due time you shall repay the same service to me,
For after we start we never lie by again.

This day before dawn I ascended a hill and look'd at the crowded
heaven,
And I said to my spirit, *When we become the enfolders of those
orbs, and the pleasure and knowledge of everything in them,
shall we be jill'd and satisfied then?*
And my spirit said, *No, we but level that lift to pass and continue
beyond.*

You are also asking me questions and I hear you,
I answer that I cannot answer, you must find out for yourself.

Sit a while, dear son,
Here are biscuits to eat and here is milk to drink,
But as soon as you sleep and renew yourself in sweet clothes, I
kiss you with a good-bye kiss and open the gate for your
egress hence.

Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams,
Now I wash the gum from your eyes,
You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light and of every
moment of your life.

Long have you timidly waded holding a plank by the shore,
Now I will you to be a bold swimmer,
To jump off in the midst of the sea, rise again, nod to me, shout,
and laughingly dash with your hair.

47

I am the teacher of athletes,
He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own proves the
width of my own,
He most honours my style who learns under it to destroy the
teacher.

The boy I love, the same becomes a man not through derived
power, but in his own right,
Wicked rather than virtuous out of conformity or fear,
Fond of his sweetheart, relishing well his steak,
Unrequited love or a slight cutting him worse than sharp steel
cuts,
First-rate to ride, to fight, to hit the bull's eye, to sail a skiff, to
sing a song or play on the banjo,
Preferring scars and the beard and faces pitted with small-pox
over all latherers,
And those well-tann'd to those that keep out of the sun,

I teach straying from me, yet who can stray from me?
I follow you whoever you are from the present hour,
My words itch at your ears till you understand them.

I do not say these things for a dollar or to fill up the time while I
wait for a boat,
(It is you talking just as much as myself, I act as the tongue of
you,
Tied in your mouth, in mine it begins to be loosen'd).

I swear I will never again mention love or death inside a house,
And I swear I will never translate myself at all, only to him or
her who privately stays with me in the open air.

If you would understand me go to the heights or water-shore,
The nearest gnat is an explanation; and a drop or motion of
waves a key,
The maul, the oar, the hand-saw, second my words,

No shutter'd room or school can commune with me,
But roughs and little children better than they.

The young mechanic is closest to me, he knows me well,
The woodman that takes his axe and jug with him shall take me
with him all day,
The farm-boy ploughing in the field feels good at the sound of
my voice,
In vessels that sail my words sail, I go with fishermen and
seamen and love them.

The soldier camp'd or upon the march is mine,
On the night ere the pending battle many seek me, and I do not
fail them,
On that solemn night (it may be their last) those that know me
seek me.

My face rubs to the hunter's face when he lies down alone in his
blanket,
The driver thinking of me does not mind the jolt of his
wagon,
The young mother and old mother comprehend me,
The girl and the wife rest the needle a moment and forget where
they are,
They and all would resume what I have told them.

I have said that the soul is not more than the body,
And I have said that the body is not more than the soul,
And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is,
And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his
own funeral drest in his shroud,
And I or you pocketless of a dime may purchase the pick of the
earth,
And to glance with an eye or show a bean in its pod confounds
the learning of all times,
And there is no trade or employment but the young man
following it may become a hero,
And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd
universe,
And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand cool and
composed before a million universes.

And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God,
For I who am curious about each am not curious about God
(No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God
and about death).

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not
in the least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than
myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each
moment then,
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face
in the glass,
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is
sign'd by God's name,
And I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er
I go,
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

49

And as to you, Death, and you, bitter hug of mortality, it is
idle to try to alarm me.

To his work without flinching the accoucheur comes,
I see the elder-hand pressing, receiving, supporting,
I recline by the sills of the exquisite flexible doors,
And mark the outlet, and mark the relief and escape.

And as to you, Corpse, I think you are good manure, but that
does not offend me,
I smell the white roses sweet-scented and growing,
I reach to the leafy lips, I reach to the polish'd breasts of melons.

And as to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths,
(No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before).

I hear you whispering there, O stars of heaven,
O suns—O grass of graves—O perpetual transfers and pro-
motions,
If you do not say anything how can I say anything?

Of the turbid pool that lies in the autumn forest,
 Of the moon that descends the steep of the soughing twilight,
 Toss, sparkles of day and dusk—toss on the black stems that
 decay in the muck,
 Toss to the moaning gibberish of the dry limbs.

I ascend from the moon, I ascend from the night,
 I perceive that the ghastly glimmer is noontday sunbeams
 reflected,
 And debouch to the steady and central from the offspring great
 or small.

50

There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but I know it is
 in me.

Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my body becomes,
 I sleep—I sleep long.

I do not know it—it is without name—it is a word unsaid,
 It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol.

Something it swings on more than the earth I swing on,
 To it the creation is the friend whose embracing awakes me.

Perhaps I might tell more. Outlines! I plead for my brothers
 and sisters.

Do you see, O my brothers and sisters?
 It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is eternal
 life—it is Happiness.

51

The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emptied them,
 And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

Listen up there! what have you to confide to me?
 Look in my face while I snuff the side of evening,
 (Talk honestly, no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute
 longer).

Do I contradict myself?
 Very well then, I contradict myself,
 (I am large, I contain multitudes),

I concentrate toward them that are nigh, I wait on the door-slab.

Who has done his day's work? who will soonest be through with
his supper?

Who wishes to walk with me?

Will you speak before I am gone? will you prove already too
late?

52

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my
gab and my loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any' on the
shadow'd wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapour and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

CHILDREN OF ADAM

TO THE GARDEN THE WORLD

To the garden the world anew ascending,
Potent mates, daughters, sons, preluding,
The love, the life of their bodies, meaning and being,
Curious here behold my resurrection after slumber,
The revolving cycles in their wide sweep having brought me
again,
Amorous, mature, all beautiful to me, all wondrous,
My limbs and the quivering fire that ever plays through them, for
reasons, most wondrous,
Existing I peer and penetrate still,
Content with the present, content with the past,
By my side or back of me Eve following,
Or in front, and I following her just the same.

FROM PENT-UP ACHING RIVERS

From pent-up aching rivers,
From that of myself without which I were nothing,
From what I am determin'd to make illustrious, even if I stand
sole among men,
From my own voice resonant, singing the phallus,
Singing the song of procreation,
Singing the need of superb children and therein superb grown
people,
Singing the muscular urge and the blending,
Singing the bedfellow's song (O resistless yearning!
O for any and each the body correlative attracting!
O for you, whoever you are, your correlative body! O it, more
than all else, you delighting!)
From the hungry gnaw that eats me night and day,
From native moments, from bashful pains, singing them,
Seeking something yet unfound though I have diligently sought
it many a long year,
Singing the true song of the soul fitful at random,

Renascent with grossest Nature or among animals,
 Of that, of them and what goes with them my poems informing.
 Of the smell of apples and lemons, of the pairing of birds,
 Of the wet of woods, of the lapping of waves,
 Of the mad pushes of waves upon the land, I them chanting,
 The overture lightly sounding, the strain anticipating,
 The welcome nearness, the sight of the perfect body,
 The swimmer swimming naked in the bath, or motionless on his
 back lying and floating,
 The female form approaching, I pensive, love-flesh tremulous,
 aching,
 The divine list for myself or you or for any one making,
 The face, the limbs, the index from head to foot, and what it
 arouses,
 The mystic deliria, the madness amorous, the utter abandon-
 ment,
 (Hark close and still what I now whisper to you,
 I love you, O you entirely possess me,
 O that you and I escape from the rest and go utterly off, free
 and lawless,
 Two hawks in the air, two fishes swimming in the sea not more
 lawless than we;)
 The furious storm through me careering, I passionately
 trembling.
 The oath of the inseparableness of two together, of the woman
 that loves me and whom I love more than my life, that oath
 swearing,
 (O I willingly stake all for you,
 O let me be lost if it must be so!
 O you and I! what is it to us what the rest do or think?
 What is all else to us? only that we enjoy each other and
 exhaust each other if it must be so;)
 From the master, the pilot I yield the vessel to,
 The general commanding me, commanding all, from him per-
 mission taking,
 From time the programme hastening (I have loiter'd too long
 as it is),
 From sex, from the warp and from the woof,
 From privacy, from frequent repinings alone,
 From plenty of persons near and yet the right person not near,
 From the soft sliding of hands over me and thrusting of fingers
 through my hair and beard,
 From the long sustain'd kiss upon the mouth or bosom,

From the close pressure that makes me or any man drunk,
 fainting with excess,
 From what the divine husband knows, from the work of
 fatherhood,
 From exultation, victory, and relief, from the bedfellow's em-
 brace in the night,
 From the act-pœms of eyes, hands, hips, and bosoms,
 From the cling of the trembling arm,
 From the bending curve and the clinch,
 From side by side the pliant coverlet off-throwing,
 From the one so unwilling to have me leave, and me just as
 unwilling to leave,
 (Yet a moment, O tender waiter, and I return),
 From the hour of shining stars and drooping dews,
 From the night a moment I emerging flitting out,
 Celebrate you act divine and you children prepared for,
 And you stalwart loins.

I SING OF THE BODY ELECTRIC

I SING the body electric.
 The armies of those I love engirth me and I engirth them,
 They will not let me off till I go with them, respond to them,
 And dis corrupt them, and charge them full with the charge of
 the soul.

Was it doubted that those who corrupt their own bodies conceal
 themselves?
 And if those who defile the living are as bad as they who defile
 the dead?
 And if the body does not do fully as much as the soul?
 And if the body were not the soul, what is the soul?

The love of the body of man or woman balks account, the body
 itself balks account,
 That of the male is perfect, and that of the female is perfect.

The expression of the face balks account;
 But the expressions of a well-made man appears not only in his
 face,

It is in his limbs and joints also, it is curiously in the joints of
his hips and wrists,
It is in his walk, the carriage of his neck, the flex of his waist
and knees, dress does not hide him,
The strong sweet quality he has strikes through the cotton and
broadcloth,
To see him pass conveys as much as the best poem, perhaps
more,
You linger to see his back, and the back of his neck and shoulder-
side.

The sprawl and fulness of babes, the bosoms and heads of
women, the folds of their dress, their style as we pass in the
street, the contour of their shape downwards,
The swimmer naked in the swimming-bath, seen as he swims
through the transparent green-shine, or lies with his face
up and rolls silently to and fro in the heave of the water,
The bending forward and backward of rowers in row-boats, the
horseman in his saddle,
Girls, mothers, house-keepers, in all their performances,
The group of labourers seated at noon-time with their open
dinner-kettles, and their wives waiting,
The female soothing a child, the farmer's daughter in the garden
or cow-yard,
The young fellow hoeing corn, the sleigh-driver driving his six
horses through the crowd,
The wrestle of wrestlers, two apprentice-boys, quite grown,
lusty, good-natured, native-born, out on the vacant lot at
sun-down after work,
The coats and caps thrown down, the embrace of love and
resistance,
The upper-hold and under-hold, the hair rumped over and blind-
ing the eyes;
The march of firemen in their own costumes, the play of mascu-
line muscle through clean-setting trousers and waist-straps,
The slow return from the fire, the pause when the bell strikes
suddenly again, and the listening on the alert,
The natural, perfect, varied attitudes, the bent head, the curv'd
neck and the counting;
Such-like I love—I loosen myself, pass freely, am at the mother's
breast with the little child,
Swim with the swimmers, wrestle with wrestlers, march in line
with the firemen, and pause, listen, count.

3

I knew a man, a common farmer, the father of five sons,
And in them the fathers of sons, and in them the fathers of sons.

This man was of wonderful vigour, calmness, beauty of person,
The shape of his head, the pale yellow and white of his hair and
beard, the immeasurable meaning of his black eyes, the
richness and breadth of his manners,

These I used to go and visit him to see, he was wise also,
He was six feet tall, he was over eighty years old, his sons were
massive, clean, bearded, tan-faced, handsome,

They and his daughters loved him, all who saw him loved
him,

They did not love him by allowance, they loved him with
personal love,

He drank water only, the blood show'd like scarlet through the
clear-brown skin of his face,

He was a frequent gunner and fisher, he sail'd his boat himself,
he had a fine one presented to him by a ship-joiner, he
had fowling-pieces presented to him by men that loved
him,

When he went with his five sons and many grand-sons to hunt
or fish, you would pick him out as the most beautiful and
vigorous of the gang,

You would wish long and long to be with him, you would wish
to sit by him in the boat that you and he might touch
each other.

4

I have perceiv'd that to be with those I like is enough,
To stop in company with the rest at evening is enough,
To be surrounded by beautiful, curious, breathing, laughing
flesh is enough,

To pass among them or touch any one, or rest my arm ever so
lightly round his or her neck for a moment, what is this
then?

I do not ask any more delight, I swim in it as in a sea.

There is something in staying close to men and women and look-
ing on them, and in the contact and odour of them, that
pleases the soul well,

All things please the soul, but these please the soul well.

5

This is the female form,
 A divine nimbus exhales from it from head to foot,
 It attracts with fierce undeniable attraction,
 I am drawn by its breath as if I were no more than a helpless
 vapour, all falls aside but myself and it,
 Books, art, religion, time, the visible and solid earth, and what
 was expected of heaven or fear'd of hell, are now consumed,
 Mad filaments, ungovernable shoots play out of it, the response
 likewise ungovernable,
 Hair, bosom, hips, bend of legs, negligent falling hands all
 diffused, mine too diffused,
 Ebb stung by the flow and flow stung by the ebb, love-flesh
 swelling and deliciously aching,
 Limitless limpid jets of love hot and enormous, quivering jelly
 of love, white-blow and delicious juice,
 Bridegroom night of love working surely and softly into the
 prostrate dawn,
 Undulating into the willing and yielding day,
 Lost in the cleave of the clasping and sweet-flush'd day.

This the nucleus—after the child is born of woman, man is
 born of woman,
 This the bath of birth, this the merge of small and large, and
 the outlet again.

Be not ashamed women, your privilege encloses the rest, and
 is the exit of the rest,
 You are the gates of the body, and you are the gates of the
 soul.

The female contains all qualities and tempers them,
 She is in her place and moves with perfect balance,
 She is all things duly veil'd, she is both passive and active,
 She is to conceive daughters as well as sons, and sons as well as
 daughters.

As I see my soul reflected in Nature,
 As I see through a mist, One with inexpressible completeness,
 sanity, beauty,
 See the bent head and arms folded over the breast, the Female
 I see.

6

The male is not less the soul nor more, he too is in his place,
 He too is all qualities, he is action and power,
 The flush of the known universe is in him,
 Scorn becomes him well, and appetite and defiance become him
 well,
 The wildest largest passions, bliss that is utmost, sorrow that
 is utmost become him well, pride is for him,
 The full-spread pride of man is calming and excellent to the
 soul,
 Knowledge becomes him, he likes it always, he brings every-
 thing to the test of himself,
 Whatever the survey, whatever the sea and the sail, he strikes
 soundings at last on'y here,
 (Where else does he strike soundings except here?)

The man's body is sacred, and the woman's body is sacred,
 No matter who it is, it is sacred--is it the meanest one in the
 labourers' gang?
 Is it one of the dull-faced immigrants just landed on the wharf?
 Each belongs here or anywhere just as much as the well-off,
 just as much as you,
 Each has his or her place in the procession.

(All is a procession,
 The universe is a procession with measured and perfect motion.)

Do you know so much yourself that you call the meanest
 ignorant?
 Do you suppose you have a right to a good sight, and he or she
 has no right to a sight?
 Do you think matter has cohered together from its diffuse float,
 and the soil is on the surface, and water runs and vegeta-
 tion sprouts
 For you only, and not for him and her?

7

A man's body at auction,
 (For before the war I often go to the slave-mart and watch the
 sale),
 I help the auctioneer, the sloven does not half know his business.

Gentlemen look on this wonder,
 Whatever the bids of the bidders they cannot be high enough
 for it,
 For it the globe lay preparing quintillions of years without one
 animal or plant,
 For it the revolving cycles truly and steadily roll'd.

In this head the all-baffling brain,
 In it and below it the makings of heroes.

Examine these limbs, red, black, or white, they are cunning in
 tendon and nerve,
 They shall be stript that you may see them.

Exquisite senses, life-lit eyes, pluck, volition,
 Flakes of breast-muscle, pliant backbone and neck, flesh not
 flabby, good-sized arms and legs,
 And wonders within there yet.

Within there runs blood,
 The same old blood! the same red-running blood!
 There swells and jets a heart, there all passions, desires, reach-
 ings, aspirations,
 (Do you think they are not there because they are not express'd
 in parlours and lecture-rooms?)

This is not only one man, this the father of those who shall be
 fathers in their turns,
 In him the start of populous states and rich republics,
 Of him countless immortal lives with countless embodiments
 and enjoyments.

How do you know who shall come from the offspring of his
 offspring through the centuries?
 (Who might you find you have come from yourself, if you could
 trace back through the centuries?)

8

A woman's body at auction,
 She too is not only herself, she is the terming mother of mothers,
 She is the bearer of them: that shall grow and be mates to the
 mothers.

Have you ever loved the body of a woman?

Have you ever loved the body of a man?

Do you not see that these are exactly the same to all in all
nations and times all over the earth?

If anything is sacred the human body is sacred,
And the glory and sweet of a man is the token of manhood
untainted,

And in man or woman a clean, strong, firm-fibred body is more
beautiful than the most beautiful face.

Have you seen the fool that corrupted his own live body? or
the fool that corrupted her own live body?

For they do not conceal themselves, and cannot conceal them-
selves.

9

O my body! I dare not desert the likes of you in other men and
women, nor the likes of the parts of you,

I believe the likes of you are to stand or fall with the likes of
the soul (and that they are the soul),

I believe the likes of you shall stand or fall with my poems, and
that they are my poems,

Man's, woman's, child's, youth's, wife's, husband's, mother's,
father's, young man's, young woman's poems.

Head, neck, hair, ears, drop and tympan of the ears,

Eyes, eye-fringes, iris of the eye, eyebrows, and the waking or
sleeping of the lids,

Mouth, tongue, lips, teeth, roof of the mouth, jaws, and the
jaw-hinges,

Nose, nostrils of the nose, and the partition,

Cheeks, temples, forehead, chin, throat, back of the neck, neck-
slue,

Strong shoulders, manly beard, scapula, hind-shoulders, and
the ample side-round of the chest,

Upper-arm, armpit, elbow-socket, lower-arm, arm-sinews, arm-
bones,

Wrist and wrist-joints, hand, palm, knuckles, thumb, forefinger,
finger-joints, finger-nails,

Broad breast-front, curling hair of the breast, breast-bone,
breast-side,

Ribs, belly, backbone, joints of the backbone,

Hips, hip-sockets, hip-strength, inward and outward round,
man-balls, man-root.

Strong set of thighs, well carrying the trunk above,
 Leg-fibres, knee, knee-pan, upper-leg, under-leg,
 Ankles, instep, foot-ball, toes, toe-joints, the heel;
 All attitudes, all the shapeliness, all the belongings of my or
 your body or of any one's body, male or female,
 The lung-sponges, the stomach-sac, the bowels sweet and
 clean,
 The brain in its folds inside the skull-frame,
 Sympathies, heart-valves, palate-valves, sexuality, maternity,
 Womanhood, and all that is a woman, and the man that comes
 from woman,
 The womb, the teats, nipples, breast-milk, tears, laughter,
 weeping, love-looks, love-perturbations and risings,
 The voice, articulation, language, whispering, shouting aloud,
 Food, drink, pulse, digestion, sweat, sleep, walling, swimming,
 Poise on the hips, leaping, reclining, embracing, arm-curving
 and tightening,
 The continual changes of the flex of the mouth, and around the
 eyes,
 The skin, the sunburnt shade, freckles, hair,
 The curious sympathy one feels when feeling with the hand the
 naked meat of the body,
 The circling rivers the breath, and breathing it in and out,
 The beauty of the waist, and thence of the hips, and thence
 downward toward the knees,
 The thin red jellies within you or within me, the bones and the
 marrow in the bones,
 The exquisite realisation of health;
 O I say these are not the parts and poems of the body only,
 but of the soul,
 O I say now these are the soul!

A WOMAN WAITS FOR ME

A WOMAN waits for me, she contains all, nothing is lacking,
 Yet all were lacking if sex were lacking, or if the moisture of
 the right man were lacking.

Sex contains all, bodies, souls,
 Meanings, proofs, purities, delicacies, results, promulgations,
 Songs, commands, health, pride, the maternal mystery, the
 seminal milk,

All hopes, benefactions, bestowals, all the passions, loves,
 beauties, delights of the earth,
 All the governments, judges, gods, follow'd persons of the earth,
 These are contain'd in sex as parts of itself and justifications of
 itself.

Without shame the man I like knows and avows the delicious-
 ness of his sex,
 Without shame the woman I like knows and avows hers.

Now I will dismiss myself from impassive women,
 I will go stay with her who waits for me, and with those women
 that are warun-blooded and sufficient for me,
 I see that they understand me and do not deny me,
 I see that they are worthy of me, I will be the robust husband
 of those women.

They are not one jot less than I am,
 They are tann'd in the face by shining suns and blowing winds,
 Their flesh has the old divine suppleness and strength,
 They know how to swim, row, ride, wrestle, shoot, run, strike,
 retreat, advance, resist, defend themselves,
 They are ultimate in their own right— they are calm, clear, well
 possess'd of themselves.

I draw you close to me, you women,
 I cannot let you go, I would do you good,
 I am for you, and you are for me, not only for our own sake,
 but for others' sakes,
 Envelop'd in you sleep greater heroes and bards,
 They refuse to awake at the touch of any man but me.

It is I, you women, I make my way,
 I am stern, acrid, large, undissuadable, but I love you,
 I do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you,
 I pour the stuff to start sons and daughters fit for these States,
 I press with slow rude muscle,
 I brace myself effectually, I listen to no entreaties,
 I dare not withdraw till I deposit what has so long accumulated
 within me.

Through you I drain the pent-up rivers of myself,
 In you I wrap a thousand onward years,

On you I graft the grafts of the best-beloved of me and America,
 The drops I distil upon you shall grow fierce and athletic girl-
 new artists, musicians, and singers,
 The babes I beget upon you are to beget babes in their turn,
 I shall demand perfect men and women out of my love-spendings,
 I shall expect them to interpenetrate with others, as I and you
 interpenetrate now,
 I shall count on the fruits of the gushing showers of them, as I
 count on the fruits of the gushing showers I give now,
 I shall look for loving crops from the birth, life, death, immor-
 tality, I plant so lovingly now.

SPONTANEOUS ME

SPONTANEOUS me, Nature,
 The loving day, the mounting sun, the friend I am happy with,
 The arm of my friend's hanging idly over my shoulder.
 The hillside whiten'd with blossoms of the mountain ash,
 The same late in autumn, the hues of red, yellow, drab, purple,
 and light and dark green,
 The rich coverlet of the grass, animals, and birds, the private
 untimm'd bank, the primitive apples, the pebble-stones,
 Beautiful dripping fragments, the negligent list of one after
 another as I happen to call them to me or think of them,
 The real poems (what we call poems being merely pictures),
 The poems of the privacy of the night, and of men like me,
 This poem drooping shy and unseen that I always carry, and
 that all men carry,
 (Know once for all, avow'd on purpose, wherever are men like
 me, are our lusty lurking masculine poems),
 Love-thoughts, love-juice, love-odour, love-yielding, love-
 climbers, and the climbing sap,
 Arms and hands of love, lips of love, phallic thumb of love,
 breasts of love, bellies press'd and glued together with love,
 Earth of chaste love, life that is only life after love,
 The body of my love, the body of the woman I love, the body
 of the man, the body of the earth,
 Soft forenoon airs that blow from the south-west,
 The hairy wild-bee that murmurs and hankers up and down,
 that gripes the full-grown lady-flower, curves upon her with
 amorous firm legs, takes his will of her, and holds himself
 tremulous and tight till he is satisfied;

The wet of woods through the early hours,
Two sleepers at night lying close together as they sleep, one with
an arm slanting down across and below the waist of the
other,
The smell of apples, aromas from crush'd sage-plant, mint,
birch-bark,
The boy's longings, the glow and pressure as he confides to me
what he was dreaming,
The dead leaf whirling its spiral whirl and falling still and con-
tent to the ground,
The no-form'd stings that sights, people, objects, sting me with,
The hubb'd sting of myself, stinging me as much as 't ever can
any one,
The sensitive, orbic, underlapp'd brothers, that only privileged
feelers may be intimate where they are,
The curious roamer the hand roaming all over the body, the
bashful withdrawing of flesh where the fingers soothingly
pause and edge themselves,
The limpid liquid within the young man,
The vex'd corrosion so pensive and so painful,
The torment, the irritable tide that will not be at rest,
The like of the same I feel, the like of the same in others,
The young man that flushes and flushes, and the young woman
that flushes and flushes,
The young man that wakes deep at night, the hot hand seeking
to repress what would master him,
The mystic amorous night, the strange half-welcome pangs,
visions, sweats,
The pulse pounding through palms and trembling encircling
fingers, the young man all colour'd, red, ashamed, angry;
The souse upon me of my lover the sea, as I lie willing and
naked,
The merriment of the twin babes that crawl over the grass in
the sun, the mother never turning her vigilant eyes from
them,
The walnut-trunk, the walnut-husks, and the ripening or ripen'd
long-round walnuts,
The continence of vegetables, birds, animals,
The consequent meanness of me should I skulk or find myself
indecent, while birds and animals never once skulk or find
themselves indecent,
The great chastity of paternity, to match the great chastity of
maternity,

The oath of procreation I have sworn, my Adamic and fresh daughters,
 The greed that eats me day and night with hungry gnaw, and I
 saturate what shall produce boys to fill my place when I
 am through,
 The wholesome relief, repose, content,
 And this bunch pluck'd at random from myself,
 It has done its work—I toss it carelessly to fall where it may.

ONE HOUR TO MADNESS AND JOY

ONE hour to madness and joy! O furious! O confine me not!
 (What is this that frees me so in storms?
 What do my shouts amid lightnings and raging winds mean?)

O to drink the mystic deliria deeper than any other man!
 O savage and tender achings! (I bequeath them to you my
 children,
 I tell them to you, for reasons, O bridegroom and bride.)

O to be yielded to you whoever you are, and you to be yielded
 to me in defiance of the world!
 O to return to Paradise! O bashful and feminine!
 O to draw you to me, to plant on you for the first time the lips
 of a determin'd man.

O the puzzle, the thrice-tied knot, the deep and dark pool, all
 untied and illumin'd!
 O to speed where there is space enough and air enough at last!
 To be absolv'd from previous ties and conventions, I from mine
 and you from yours!
 To find a new unthought-of nonchalance with the best of Nature!
 To have the gag remov'd from one's mouth!
 To have the feeling to-day or any day I am sufficient as I am.

O something unprov'd! something in a trance!
 To escape utterly from others' anchors and holds!
 To drive free! to love free! to dash reckless and dangerous!
 To court destruction with taunts, with invitations!
 To ascend, to leap to the heavens of the love indicated to me!
 To rise thither with my inebriate soul!
 To be lost if it must be so!

To feed the remainder of life with one hour of fulness and freedom!
 With one brief hour of madness and joy.

OUT OF THE ROLLING OCEAN THE CROWD

Out of the rolling ocean the crowd came a drop gently to me,
 Whispering, *I love you, before long I die,*
I have travell'd a long way merely to look on you to touch you,
For I could not die till I once look'd on you,
For I fear'd I might afterward lose you.

Now we have met, we have look'd, we are safe,
 Return in peace to the ocean my love,
 I too am part of that ocean, my love, we are not so much separated,
 Behold the great rondure, the cohesion of all, how perfect!
 But as for me, for you, the irresistible sea is to separate us,
 As for an hour carrying us diverse, yet cannot carry us diverse forever;
 Be not impatient—a little space—know you I salute the air,
 the ocean and the land,
 Every day at sundown for your dear sake, my love.

AGES AND AGES RETURNING AT INTERVALS

AGES and ages returning at intervals,
 Undestroy'd, wandering immortal,
 Lusty, phallic, with the potent original loins, perfectly sweet,
 I, chanter of Adamic songs,
 Through the new garden the West, the great cities calling,
 Deliriate, thus prelude what is generated, offering these, offering myself,
 Bathing myself, bathing my songs in Sex,
 Offspring of my loins.

WE TWO, HOW LONG WE WERE FOOL'D

We two, how long we were fool'd,
 Now transmuted, we swiftly escape as Nature escapes,

We are Nature, long have we been absent, but now we
 return,
 We become plants, trunks, foliage, roots, bark,
 We are bedded in the ground, we are rocks,
 We are oaks, we grow in the openings side by side,
 We browse, we are two among the wild herds spontaneous as
 any,
 We are two fishes swimming in the sea together,
 We are what locust blossoms are, we drop scent around lanes
 mornings and evenings,
 We are also the coarse smut of heasts, vegetables, minerals,
 We are two predatory hawks, we soar above and look down,
 We are two resplendent suns, we it is who balance ourselves
 orbic and stellar, we are as two comets,
 We prowl farg'd and four-footed in the woods. we spring on
 prey,
 We are two clouds forenoons and afternoons driving overhead,
 We are seas mingling, we are two of those cheerful waves rolling
 over each other and interwetting each other,
 We are what the atmosphere is, transparent, receptive, pervious,
 impervious,
 We are snow, rain, cold, darkness, we are each product and
 influence of the globe,
 We have circled and circled till we have arrived home again,
 we two,
 We have voided all but freedom and all but our own joy.

O HYMEN! O HYMENEE!

O HYMEN! O hymence! why do you tantalise me thus?
 O why sting me for a swift moment only?
 Why can you not continue? O why do you now cease?
 Is it because if you continued beyond the swift moment you
 would soon certainly kill me?

I AM HE THAT ACHES WITH LOVE

I AM he that aches with amorous love;
 Does the earth gravitate? does not all matter, aching, attract
 all matter?
 So the body of me to all I meet or know.

NATIVE MOMENTS

NATIVE moments—when you come upon me—ah, you are here
 now,
 Give me now libidinous joys only.
 Give me the drench of my passions, give me life coarse and
 rank,
 To-day I go consort with Nature's darlings, to-night too,
 I am for those who believe in loose delights, I share the mid-
 night orgies of young men,
 I dance with the dancers and drink with the drinkers,
 The echoes ring with our indecent calls, I pick out some low
 person for my dearest friend,
 He shall be lawless, rude, illiterate, he shall be one condemn'd
 by others for deeds done,
 I will play a part no longer, why should I exile myself from my
 companions?
 O you shunn'd persons, I at least do not shun you,
 I come forthwith in your midst, I will be your poet,
 I will be more to you than to any of the rest.

ONCE I PASS'D THROUGH A POPULOUS CITY

ONCE I pass'd through a populous city imprinting my brain for
 future use with its shows, architecture, customs, traditions.
 Yet now of all that city I remember only a woman I casually
 met there who detain'd me for love of me,
 Day by day and night by night we were together—all else has
 long been forgotten by me,
 I remember, I say, only that woman who passionately clung to me,
 Again we wander, we love, we separate again,
 Again she holds me by the hand, I must not go,
 I see her close beside me with silent lips sad and tremulous.

I HEARD YOU SOLEMN-SWEET PIPES OF THE ORGAN

I HEARD you solemn-sweet pipes of the organ as last Sunday
 morn I pass'd the church,
 Winds of autumn, as I walk'd the woods at dusk I heard your
 long-stretch'd sighs up above so mournful,

I heard the perfect Italian tenor singing at the opera, I heard
the soprano in the midst of the quartet singing;
Heart of my love! you too I heard murmuring low through the
of the wrists around my head,
Heard the pulse of you when all was still ringing little bells last
night under my ear.

FACING WEST FROM CALIFORNIA'S SHORES

FACING west from California's shores,
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of maternity,
the land of migrations, look afar,
Look off the shores of my Western sea, the circle almost circled;
For starting westward from Hindustan, from the vales of Kash-
mere,
From Asia, from the north, from the God, the sage, and the
hero,
From the south, from the flowery peninsulas and the spice
islands,
Long having wander'd since, round the earth having wander'd,
Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous,
(But where is what I started for so long ago?
And why is it yet unfound?)

AS ADAM EARLY IN THE MORNING

As Adam early in the morning,
Walking forth from the bower refresh'd with sleep,
Behold me where I pass, hear my voice, approach,
Touch me, touch the palm of your hand to my body as I pass,
Be not afraid of my body.

CALAMUS

IN PATHS UNTRODDEN

In paths untrodden,
In the growth by margins of pond-waters,
Escaped from the life that exhibits itself,
From all the standards hitherto publish'd, from the pleasures,
 profits, conformities,
Which too long I was offering to feed my soul,
Clear to me now standards not yet publish'd, clear to me that
 my soul,
That the soul of the man I speak for rejoices in comrades,
Here by myself away from the clank of the world,
Tallying and talk'd to here by tongues aromatic,
No longer abash'd (for in this secluded spot I can respond as I
 would not dare elsewhere),
Strong upon me the life that does not exhibit itself, yet contains
 all the rest,
Resolv'd to sing no songs to-day but those of manly attachment,
Projecting them along that substantial life,
Bequeathing hence types of athletic love,
Afternoon this delicious Ninth-month in my forty-first year,
I proceed for all who are or have been young men,
To tell the secret of my nights and days,
To celebrate the need of comrades.

SCENTED HERBAGE OF MY BREAST

SCENTED herbage of my breast,
Leaves from you I glean, I write, to be perused best afterwards,
Tomb-leaves, body-leaves growing up above me above death,
Perennial roots, tall leaves, O the winter shall not freeze you,
 delicate leaves,
Every year shall you bloom again, out from where you retired
 you shall emerge again;
O I do not know whether many passing by will discover you or
 inhale your faint odour, but I believe a few will;

O slender leaves! O blossoms of my blood! I permit you to
 tell in your own way of the heart that is under you,
 O I do not know what you mean there underneath your selves,
 you are not happiness,
 You are often more bitter than I can bear, you burn and sting
 me,
 Yet you are beautiful to me you faint tinged roots, you make
 me think of death,
 Death is beautiful from you (what indeed is finally beautiful
 except death and love?)
 O I think it is not for life I am chanting here my chant of lovers,
 I think it must be for death.
 For how calm, how solemn it grows to ascend to the atmosphere
 of lovers,
 Death or life I am then indifferent, my soul declines to prefer,
 (I am not sure but the high soul of lovers welcomes death most),
 Indeed, O death, I think now these leaves mean precisely the
 same as you mean,
 Grow up taller sweet leaves that I may see! grow up out of my
 breast!
 Spring away from the conceal'd heart there!
 Do not fold yourself so in your pink-tinged roots' timid leaves!
 Do not remain down there so ashamed, herbage of my breast!
 Come, I am determin'd to unbare this broad breast of mine, I
 have long enough stifled and choked;
 Emblematic and capricious blades I leave you, now you serve
 me not,
 I will say what I have to say by itself,
 I will sound myself and comrades only, I will never again utter
 a call only their call,
 I will raise with it immortal reverberations through the States,
 I will give an example to lovers to take permanent shape and
 will through the States,
 Through me shall the words be said to make death exhilarating,
 Give me your tone therefore, O death, that I may accord with it,
 Give me yourself, for I see that you belong to me now above
 all, and are folded inseparably together, you love and
 death are,
 Nor will I allow you to balk me any more with what I was
 calling life,
 For now it is convey'd to me that you are the purports essential,
 That you hide in these shifting forms of life, for reasons, and
 that they are mainly for you,

That you beyond them come forth to remain, the real reality,
 That behind the mask of materials you patiently wait, no matter
 how long,
 That you will one day perhaps take control of all,
 That you will perhaps dissipate this entire show of appearance,
 That may-be you are what it is all for, but it does not last so
 very long,
 But you will last very long.

WHOEVER YOU ARE HOLDING ME NOW IN HAND

WHOEVER you are holding me now in hand,
 Without one thing all will be useless,
 I give you fair warning 'before you attempt me further,
 I am not what you supposed. but far different.

Who is he that would become my follower?
 Who would sign himself a candidate for my affections?

The way is suspicious, the result uncertain, perhaps destructive,
 You would have to give up all else, I alone would expect to be
 your sole and exclusive standard,
 Your novitiate would even then be long and exhausting,
 The whole past theory of your life and all conformity to the
 lives around you would have to be abandon'd,
 Therefore release me now before troubling yourself any further,
 let go your hand from my shoulders,
 Put me down and depart on your way.

Or else by stealth in some wood for trial,
 Or back of a rock in the open air,
 (For in any roof'd room of a house I emerge not, nor in company,
 And in libraries I lie as one dumb, a gawk, or unborn, or
 dead),
 But just possibly with you on a high hill, first watching lest any
 person for miles around approach unawares,
 Or possibly with you sailing at sea, or on the beach of the sea or
 some quiet island,
 Here to put your lips upon mine I permit you,
 With the comrade's long-dwelling kiss or the new husband's
 kiss,
 For I am the new husband and I am the comrade.

Or if you will, thrusting me beneath your clothing,
Where I may feel the throbs of your heart or rest upon your hip,
Carry me when you go forth over land or sea;
For thus merely touching you is enough, is best,
And thus touching you would I silently sleep and be carried
eternally.

But these leaves conning you con at peril,
For these leaves and me you will not understand,
They will elude you at first and still more afterward, I will
certainly elude you,
Even while you should think you had unquestionably caught
me, behold!
Already you see I have escaped from you.

For it is not for what I have put into it that I have written this
book,
Nor is it by reading it you will acquire it,
Nor do those know me best who admire me and vauntingly
praise me,
Nor will the candidates for my love (unless at most a very few)
prove victorious,
Nor will my poems do good only, they will do just as much evil,
perhaps more,
For all is useless without that which you may guess at many
times and not hit, that which I hinted at;
Therefore release me and depart on your way.

FOR YOU, O DEMOCRACY

Come, I will make the continent indissoluble,
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon,
I will make divine magnetic lands,
With the love of comrades,
With the life-long love of comrades.

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of
America, and along the shores of the great lakes, and all
over the prairies,
I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each other's
necks,
By the love of comrades,
By the manly love of comrades.

For you these from me, O Democracy, to serve you, ma femme!
For you, for you I am trilling these songs.

THESE I SINGING IN SPRING

THESE I singing in spring collect for lovers,
(For who but I should understand lovers and all their sorrow
and joy?
And who but I should be the poet of comrades?)
Collecting I traverse the garden the world, but soon I pass the
gates,
Now along the pond-side, now wading in a little, fearing not the
wet,
Now by the post-and-rail fences where the old stones thrown
there, picked from the fields, have accumulated,
(Wild-flowers and vines and weeds come up through the stones
and partly cover them, beyond these I pass),
Far, far in the forest, or sauntering later in summer, before I
think where I go,
Solitary, smelling the earthy smell, stopping now and then in
the silence,
Alone I had thought, yet soon a troop gathers around me,
Some walk by my side and some behind, and some embrace my
arms or neck,
They the spirits of dear friends dead or alive, thicker they come,
a great crowd, and I in the middle,
Collecting, dispensing, singing, there I wander with them,
Plucking something for tokens, tossing toward whoever is near
me,
Here, lilac, with a branch of pine,
Here, out of my pocket, some moss which I pull'd off a live-oak
in Florida as it hung trailing down,
Here, some pinks and laurel leaves, and a handful of sage,
And here what I now draw from the water, wading in the pond-
side,
(O here I last saw him that tenderly loves me, and returns again
never to separate from me,
And this; O this shall henceforth be the token of comrades, this
calamus-root shall,
Interchange it youths with each other! let none render it back!)
And twigs of maple and a bunch of wild orange and chestnut,

And stems of currants and plum-blows, and the aromatic cedar,
These I compass'd around by a thick cloud of spirits,
Wandering, point to or touch as I pass, or throw them hither
from me,
Indicating to each one what he shall have, giving something to
each;
But what I drew from the water by the pond-side, that I reserve,
I will give of it, but only to them that love as I myself am
capable of loving.

NOT HEAVING FROM MY RIBB'D BREAST ONLY

Not heaving from my ribb'd breast only,
Not in sighs at night in rage dissatisfied with myself,
Not in those long-drawn, ill-suppress'd sighs,
Not in many an oath and promise broken,
Not in my wilful and savage soul's volition,
Not in the subtle nourishment of the air,
Not in this beating and pounding at my temples and wrists,
Not in the curious systole and diastole within which will one day
cease,
Not in many a hungry wish told to the skies only,
Not in cries, laughter, defiance, thrown from me when alone far
in the wilds,
Not in husky pantings through clinched teeth,
Not in sounded and resounded words, chattering words, echoes,
dead words,
Not in the murmurs of my dreams while I sleep,
Nor the other murmurs of these incredible dreams of every day,
Nor in the limbs and senses of my body that take you and
dismiss you continually—not there,
Not in any or all of them, O adhesiveness! O pulse of my life!
Need I that you exist and show yourself any more than in these
songs.

OF THE TERRIBLE DOUBT OF APPEARANCES

Of the terrible doubt of appearances,
Of the uncertainty after all, that we may be deluded,
That may-be reliance and hope are but speculations after all,
That may-be identity beyond the grave is a beautiful fable only,

May-be the things I perceive, the animals, plants, men, hills,
 shining and flowing waters,
 The skies of day and night, colours, densities, forms, may-be
 these are (as doubtless they are) only apparitions, and the
 real something has yet to be known,
 (How often they dart out of themselves as if to confound me 'and
 mock me!
 How often I think neither I know, nor any man knows, 'aught of
 them),
 May-be seeming to me what they are (as doubtless they indeed
 but seem) as from my present point of view, and might
 prove (as of course they would) nought of what they
 appear, or nought anyhow, from entirely changed points
 of view;
 To me these and the like of these are curiously answer'd by my
 lovers, my dear friends,
 When he whom I love travels with me or sits a long while holding
 me by the hand,
 When the subtle air, the impalpable, the sense that words and
 reason hold not, surround us and pervade us,
 Then I am charged with untold and untellable wisdom, I am
 silent, I require nothing further,
 I cannot answer the question of appearances or that of identity
 beyond the grave,
 But I walk or sit indifferent, I am satisfied,
 He ahold of my hand has completely satisfied me.

THE BASE OF ALL METAPHYSICS

AND now, gentlemen,
 A word I give to remain in your memories and minds,
 As base and finale too for all metaphysics.

(So to the students the old professor, '
 At the close of his crowded course.)

Having studied the new and antique, the Greek and Germanic
 systems,
 Kant having studied and stated, Fichte and Schelling and Hegel,
 Stated the lore of Plato, and Socrates greater than Plato,
 And greater than Socrates sought and stated, Christ divine
 having studied long,

I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and Germanic systems,
 See the philosophies all, Christian churches and tenets see,
 Yet underneath Socrates clearly see, and underneath Christ the
 divine I see,
 The dear love of man for his comrade, the attraction of friend to
 friend,
 Of the well-married husband and wife, of children and parents,
 Of city for city and land for land.

RECORDERS AGES HENCE

RECORDERS ages hence,
 Come, I will take you down underneath this impassive exterior.
 I will tell you what to say of me,
 Publish my name and hang up my picture as that of the
 tenderest lover,
 The friend the lover's portrait, of whom his friend his lover was
 fondest,
 Who was not proud of his songs, but of the measureless ocean of
 love within him, and freely pour'd it forth,
 Who oftener walk'd lonesome walks thinking of his dear friends,
 his lovers,
 Who pensive away from one he lov'd often lay sleepless and
 dissatisfied at night,
 Who knew too well the sick, sick dread lest the one he lov'd
 might secretly be indifferent to him,
 Whose happiest days were far away through fields, in woods, on
 hills, he and another wandering hand in hand, they twain
 apart from other men,
 Who oft as he saunter'd the streets curv'd with his arm the
 shoulder of his friend, while the arm of his friend rested
 upon him also.

WHEN I HEARD AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY

WHEN I heard at the close of the day how my name had been
 receiv'd with plaudits in the capitol, still it was not a happy
 night for me that follow'd,
 And else when I carous'd, or when my plans were accomplish'd,
 still I was not happy,
 But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of perfect health,
 refresh'd, singing, inhaling the ripe breath of autumn,

When I saw the full moon in the west grow pale and disappear
 in the morning light,
 When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undressing bathed,
 laughing with the cool waters, and saw the sun rise,
 And when I thought how my dear friend, my lover, was on his
 way coming, O then I was happy,
 O then each breath tasted sweeter, and all that day my food
 nourish'd me more, and the beautiful day pass'd well,
 And the next came with equal joy, and with the next at evening
 came my friend,
 And that night while all was still I heard the waters roll slowly
 continually up the shores,
 I heard the kissing rustle of the liquid and sands as directed to
 me whispering to congratulate me,
 For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the same cover
 in the cool night,
 In the stillness in the autumn moonbeams his face was inclined
 toward me,
 And his arm lay lightly around my breast—and that night I
 was happy.

ARE YOU THE NEW PERSON DRAWN TOWARD ME?

ARE you the new person drawn toward me?
 To begin with, take warning, I am surely far different from what
 you suppose;
 Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal?
 Do you think it so easy to have me become your lover?
 Do you think the friendship of me would be unalloy'd satis-
 faction?
 Do you think I am trusty and faithful?
 Do you see no further than this façade, this smooth and tolerant
 manner of me?
 Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground toward a real
 heroic man?
 Have you no thought, O dreamer, that it may be all maya,
 illusion?

ROOTS AND LEAVES THEMSELVES ALONE

Roots and leaves themselves alone are these,
 Scents brought to men and women from the wild woods and
 pond-side,

Breast-sorrel and pinks of love, fingers that wind around tighter
 than vines,
 Cushes from the throats of birds hid in the foliage of trees as the
 sun is risen,
 Breezes of land and love set from living shores to you on the
 living sea, to you O sailors!
 Frost-mellow'd berries and Third-month twigs offer'd fresh to
 young persons wandering out in the fields when the winter
 breaks up,
 Love-buds put before you and within you whoever you are,
 Buds to be unfolded on the old terms,
 If you bring the warmth of the sun to them they will open and
 bring form, colour, perfume, to you,
 If you become the aliment and the wet they will become flowers,
 fruits, tall branches, and trees.

NOT HEAT FLAMES UP AND CONSUMES

Nor heat flames up and consumes,
 Not sea-waves burry in and out,
 Not the air delicious and dry, the air of ripe summer, bears
 lightly along white down-balls of myriads of seeds,
 Wafted, sailing gracefully, to drop where they may;
 Not these, O none of these more than the flames of me, consum-
 ing, burning for his love whom I love,
 O none more than I hurrying in and out;
 Does the tide hurry, seeking something, and never give up?
 O I the same,
 O nor down-balls nor perfumes, nor the high rain-emitting
 clouds, are borne through the open air,
 Any more than my soul is borne through the open air,
 Wafted in all directions O love, for friendship, for you,

TRICKLE DROPS

TRICKLE drops! my blue veins leaving!
 O drops of me! trickle, slow drops,
 Candid from me falling, drip, bleeding drops,
 From wounds made to free you whence you were prison'd,
 From my face, from my forehead and lips,
 From my breast, from within where I was conceal'd, press forth
 red drops, confession drops,

Stain every page, stain every song I sing, every word I say,
bloody drops,
Let them know your scarlet heat, let them glisten,
Saturate them with yourself all ashamed and wet,
Glow upon all I have written or shall write, bleeding drops,
Let it all be seen in your light, blushing drops.

CITY OF ORGIES

CITY of orgies, walks, and joys,
City whom that I have lived and sung in your midst will one day
make you illustrious,
Not the pageants of you, not your shifting tableaux, your spectacles, repay me,
Not the interminable rows of your houses, nor the ships at the wharves,
Nor the processions in the streets, nor the bright windows with goods in them,
Nor to converse with learn'd persons, or bear my share in the soiree or feast;
Not these, but as I pass, O Manhattan, your frequent and swift flash of eyes offering me love,
Offering response to my own—these repay me,
Lovers, continual lovers, only repay me.

BEHOLD THIS SWARTHY FACE

BEHOLD this swarthy face, these grey eyes,
This beard, the white wool unclipt upon my neck,
My brown hands and the silent manner of me without charm;
Yet comes one a Manhattanese and ever at parting kisses me
lightly on the lips with robust love,
And I on the crossing of the street or on the ship's deck give a kiss in return,
We observe that salute of American comrades land and sea,
We are those two natural and nonchalant persons.

I SAW IN LOUISIANA A LIVE-OAK GROWING

I SAW in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches,
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of dark green,

And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself,
 But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone
 there without its friend near, for I knew I could not,
 And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it,
 and twined around it a little moss,
 And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in my room,
 It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
 (For I believe lately I think of little else than of them),
 Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of
 • manly love;
 For all that, and though the live-pak glistens there in Louisiana
 solitary in a wide flat space,
 Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend a lover near,
 I know very well I could not.

TO A STRANGER

PASSING stranger! you do not know how longingly I look upon
 you,
 You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking (it comes to
 me as of a dream).
 I have somewhere surely lived a life of joy with you,
 All is recall'd as we flit by each other, fluid, affectionate, chaste,
 matured,
 You grew up with me, were a boy with me or a girl with me,
 I ate with you and slept with you, your body has become not
 yours only nor left my body mine only,
 You give me the pleasure of your eyes, face, flesh, as we pass,
 you take of my beard, breast, hands, in return,
 I am not to speak to you, I am to think of you when I sit alone
 or wake at night alone.
 I am to wait, I do not doubt I am to meet you again,
 I am to see to it that I do not lose you.

THIS MOMENT YEARNING AND THOUGHTFUL

THIS moment yearning and thoughtful sitting alone,
 It seems to me there are other men in other lands yearning and
 thoughtful,
 It seems to me I can look over and behold them in Germany,
 Italy, France, Spain,
 Or far, far away, in China, or in Russia or Japan, talking other
 dialects,

And it seems to me if I could know those men I should become
 attached to them as I do to men in my own lands,
 O I know we should be brethren and lovers,
 I know I should be happy with them.

I HEAR IT WAS CHARGED AGAINST ME

I HEAR it was charged against me that I sought to 'destroy
 institutions,
 But really I am neither for nor against institutions,
 (What indeed have I in common with them? or what with the
 destruction of them?)
 Only I will establish in the Mannahatta and in every city of
 these States inland and seaboard,
 And in the fields and woods, and above every keel little or large
 that dents the water,
 Without edifices or rules or trustees or any argument,
 The institution of the dear love of comrades.

THE PRAIRIE-GRASS DIVIDING

THE prairie-grass dividing, its special odour breathing,
 I demand of it the spiritual corresponding,
 Demand the most copious and close companionship of men,
 Demand the blades to rise of words, acts, beings,
 Those of the open atmosphere, coarse, sunlit, fresh, nutritious,
 Those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with freedom and
 command, leading not following,
 Those with a never-quell'd audacity, those with sweet and lusty
 flesh clear of taint,
 Those that look carelessly in the faces of presidents and gover-
 nors, as to say, *Who are you?*
 Those of earth-born passion, simple, never constrain'd, never
 obedient,
 Those of inland America.

WHEN I PERUSE THE CONQUER'D FAME

WHEN I peruse the conquer'd fame of heroes and the victories
 of mighty generals, I do not envy the generals,
 Nor the President in his presidency, nor the rich in his great
 house,

But when I hear of the brotherhood of lovers, how it was with them,
 How together through life, through dangers, odium, unchanging,
 long and long,
 Through youth and through middle and old age, how unfaltering,
 how affectionate and faithful they were,
 Then I am pensive—I hastily walk away fill'd with the bitterest
 envy.

WE TWO BOYS TOGETHER CLINGING

We two boys together clinging,
 One the other never leaving,
 Up and down the roads going, North and South excursions
 making,
 Power enjoying, elbows stretching, fingers clutching,
 Arm'd and fearless, eating, drinking, sleeping, loving,
 No law less than ourselves owning, sailing, soldiering, thieving,
 threatening,
 Misers, menials, priests alarming, air breathing, water drinking,
 on the turf of the sea-beach dancing,
 Cities wrenching, ease scorning, statutes mocking, feebleness
 chasing,
 Fulfilling our foray.

A PROMISE TO CALIFORNIA

A PROMISE to California,
 Or inland to the great pastoral Plains, and on to Puget sound
 and Oregon;
 Sojourning east a while longer, soon I travel toward you, to
 remain, to teach robust American love,
 For I know very well that I and robust love belong among you,
 inland, and along the Western sea;
 For these States tend inland and toward the Western sea, and I
 will also.

HERE THE FRAILEST LEAVES OF ME

HERE the frailest leaves of me and yet my strongest lasting,
 Here I shade and hide my thoughts, I myself do not expose them.
 And yet they expose me more than all my other poems.

NO LABOUR-SAVING MACHINE

No labour-saving machine,
 Nor discovery have I made,
 Nor will I be able to leave behind me any wealthy bequest to
 found a hospital or library,
 Nor reminiscence of any deed of courage for America,
 Nor literary success nor intellect, nor book for the book-shelf,
 But a few carols vibrating through the air I leave,
 For comrades and lovers.

A GLIMPSE

A GLIMPSE through an interstice caught,
 Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-room around the
 stove late of a winter night, and I unremark'd seated in a
 corner,
 Of a youth who loves me and whom I love, silently approaching
 and seating himself near, that he may hold me by the hand,
 A long while amid the noises of coming and going, of drinking
 and oath and snutt'y jest.
 There we two, content, happy in being together, speaking little,
 perhaps not a word.

A LEAF FOR HAND IN HAND

A LEAF for hand in hand;
 You natural persons old and young!
 You on the Mississippi and on all the branches and bayous of the
 Mississippi!
 You friendly boatmen and mechanics! you roughs!
 You twain! and all processions moving along the streets!
 I wish to infuse myself among you till I see it common for you
 to walk hand in hand.

EARTH, MY LIKENESS

EARTH, my likeness,
 Though you look so impassive, ample, and spheric there,
 I now suspect that is not all;

I now suspect there is something fierce in you eligible to burst forth,
 For an athlete is enamour'd of me, and I of him,
 But toward him there is something fierce and terrible in me eligible to burst forth,
 I dare not tell it in words, not even in these songs.

I DREAM'D IN A DREAM

I DREAM'D in a dream I saw a city invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth,
 I dreamed that was the new city of Friends,
 Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust love, it had the rest,
 It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that city,
 And in all their looks and words.

WHAT THINK YOU I TAKE MY PEN IN HAND?

WHAT think you I take my pen in hand to record?
 The battle-ship, perfect modell'd, majestic, that I saw pass the offing to-day under full sail?
 The splendours of the past day? or the splendour of the night that envelops me?
 Or the vaunted glory and growth of the great city spread around me? —no;
 But merely of two simple men I saw to-day on the pier in the midst of the crowd, parting the parting of dear friends,
 The one to remain hung on the other's neck and passionately kiss'd him,
 While the one to depart tightly prest the one to remain in his arms.

TO THE EAST AND TO THE WEST

To the East and to the West,
 To the man of the Seaside State and of Pennsylvania,
 To the Kanadian of the north, to the Southerner I love,
 These with perfect trust to depict you as myself, the germ is in all men,
 I believe the main purport of these States is to found a superb friendship, exalté, previously unknown,
 Because I perceive it waits, and has been always waiting, latent in all men.

SOMETIMES WITH ONE I LOVE

SOMETIMES with one I love I fill myself with rage for fear I effuse
 unreturn'd love,
 But now I think there is no unreturn'd love, the pay is certain
 one way or another,
 (I loved a certain person ardently and my love was not return'd,
 Yet out of that I have written these songs.)

TO A WESTERN BOY

MANY things to absorb I teach to help you become elve of mine;
 Yet if blood like mine circulate not in your veins,
 If you be not silently selected by lovers and do not silently select
 lovers,
 Of what use is it that you seek to become elve of mine?

FAST-ANCHOR'D ETERNAL O LOVE!

FAST-ANCHOR'D eternal O love! O woman I love!
 O bride! O wife! more resistless than I can tell, the thought of
 you!
 Then separate, as disembodied or another born,
 Ethereal, the last athletic reality, my consolation,
 I ascend, I float in the regions of your love, O man,
 O sharer of my roving life.

AMONG THE MULTITUDE

AMONG the men and women the multitude,
 I perceive one picking me out by secret and divine signs,
 Acknowledging none else, not parent, wife, husband, brother,
 child, any nearer than I am,
 Some are baffled, but that one is not—that one knows me.

Ah, lover, and perfect equal,
 I meant that you should discover me so by faint indirections,
 And I when I meet you mean to discover you by the like in you.

O YOU WHOM I OFTEN AND SILENTLY COME

O you whom I often and silently come where you are that I may
be with you,
As I walk by your side or sit near, or remain in the same room
with you,
Little you know the subtle electric fire that for your sake is
playing within me.

THAT SHADOW MY LIKENESS

THAT shadow my likeness that goes to and fro seeking a liveli-
hood, chattering, chaffering,
How often I find myself standing and looking at it where it
flits,
How often I question and doubt whether that is really me;
But among my lovers and carolling these songs,
O I never doubt whether that is really me.

FULL OF LIFE NOW

FULL of life now, compact, visible,
I, forty years old the eighty-third year of the States,
To one a century hence or any number of centuries hence,
To you yet unborn these, seeking you.

When you read these I that was visible am become invisible,
Now it is you, compact, visible, realising my poems, seeking me,
Fancying how happy you were if I could be with you and become
your comrade;
Be it as if I were with you. (Be not too certain but I am now
with you.)

SALUT AU MONDE !

1

O TAKE my hand, Walt Whitman!
Such gliding wonders! such sights and sounds!
Such join'd unended links, each hook'd to the next,
Each answering all, each sharing the earth with all.

What widens' within you, Walt Whitman?
What waves and souls exuding?
What climes? what persons and cities are here?
Who are the infants, some playing, some slumbering?
Who are the girls? who are the married women?
Who are the groups of old men going slowly with their arms
about each other's necks?
What rivers are these? what forests and fruits are these?
What are the mountains call'd that rise so high in the mists?
What myriads of dwellings are they fill'd with dwellers?

2

Within me latitude widens, longitude lengthens,
Asia, Africa, Europe, are to the east - America is provided for
in the west,
Banding the bulge of the earth winds the hot equator,
Curiously north and south turn the axis ends,
Within me is the longest day, the sun wheels in slanting rings, it
does not set for months,
Stretched in due time within me the midnight sun just rises
above the horizon and sinks again,
Within me zoues, seas, cataracts, forests, volcanoes, groups,
Malaysia, Polynesia, and the great West Indian islands,

3

What do you hear, Walt Whitman?

I hear the workman singing and the farmer's wife singing,
I hear in the distance the sounds of children and of animals early
in the day,

I hear emulous shouts of Australians pursuing the wild horse,
 I hear the Spanish dance with castanets in the chestnut shade,
 to the rebeck and guitar,
 I hear continual echoes from the Thames,
 I hear fierce French liberty songs.
 I hear of the Italian boat sculler the musical recitative of old
 poems,
 I hear the locusts in Syria as they strike the grain and grass with
 the showers of their terrible clouds,
 I hear the Coptic refrain toward sundown, pensively falling on
 the breast of the black venerable vast mother the Nile,
 I hear the chirp of the Mexican mulcteer, and the bells of the
 mule,
 I hear the Arab muezzin calling from the top of the mosque,
 I hear the Christian priests at the altars of their churches, I hear
 the responsive base and soprano,
 I hear the cry of the Cossack, and the sailor's voice putting to
 sea at Okotsk,
 I hear the wheeze of the slave scuffle as the slaves march on as
 the husky gangs pass on by twos and threes, fasten'd to-
 gether with wrist-chains and ankle-chains,
 I hear the Hebrew reading his records and psalms,
 I hear the rhythmic myths of the Greeks, and the strong legends
 of the Romans,
 I hear the tale of the divine life and bloody death of the beautiful
 God the Christ,
 I hear the Hindoo teaching his favourite pupil the loves, wars,
 adages, transmitted safely to this day from poets who wrote
 three thousand years ago.

4

What do you see, Walt Whitman?

Who are they you salute, and that one after another salute you?

I see a great round wonder rolling through space,
 I see diminute farms, hamlets, ruins, graveyards, jails, factories,
 palaces, hovels, huts of barbarians, tents of nomads upon
 the surface,
 I see the shaded part on one side where the sleepers are sleeping,
 and the sunlit part on the other side,
 I see the curious rapid change of the light and shade,
 I see distant lands, as real and near to the inhabitants of them as
 my land is to me.

I see plenteous waters,
 I see mountain peaks, I see the sierras of Andes where they range,
 I see plainly the Himalayas, Chian Shahs, Altays, Ghauts,
 I see the giant pinnacles of Elbruz, Kazbek, Bazardjusi,
 I see the Styrian Alps, and the Karnac Alps,
 I see the Pyrenees, Balks, Carpathians, and to the north the
 Dofrafields, and off at sea Mount Hecla,
 I see Vesuvius and Etna, the Mountains of the Moon, and the
 Red Mountains of Madagascar.
 I see the Lybian, Arabian, and Asiatic deserts,
 I see huge dreadful Arctic and Antarctic icebergs,
 I see the superior oceans and the inferior ones, the Atlantic and
 Pacific, the Sea of Mexico, the Brazilian Sea, and the Sea
 of Peru,
 The waters of Hindustan, the China Sea, and the Gulf of Guinea,
 The Japan waters, the beautiful bay of Nagasaki, land-lock'd in
 its mountains,
 The spread of the Baltic, Caspian, Bothnia, the British shores,
 and the Bay of Biscay,
 The clear-sunn'd Mediterranean, and from one to another of its
 islands,
 The White Sea, and the sea around Greenland.

I behold the mariners of the world,
 Some are in storms, some in the night with the watch on the
 lookout,
 Some drifting helplessly, some with contagious diseases.

I behold the sail and steamships of the world, some in clusters
 in port, some on their voyages,
 Some double the Cape of Storms, some Cape Verde, others Capes
 Guardafui, Ron, or Bajadore,
 Others Dondra Head, others pass the Straits of Sunda, others
 Cape Lopatka, others Behring's Straits,
 Others Cape Horn, others sail the Gulf of Mexico or along Cuba
 or Hayti, others Hudson's Bay or Raffen's Bay,
 Others pass the Straits of Dover, others enter the Wash, others
 the Firth of Solway, others round Cape Clear, others the
 Land's End,
 Others traverse the Zuyder Zee or the Scheld,
 Others as comers and goers at Gibraltar or the Dardanelles,
 Others sternly push their way through the northern winter-
 packs,

Others descend or ascend the Obi or the Lena,
 Others the Niger or the Congo, others the Indus, the Buran-
 pooter and Cambodia,
 Others wait steam'd up ready to start in the ports of Australia
 Wait at Liverpool, Glasgow, Dublin, Marseilles, Lisbon, Naples,
 Hamburg, Bremen, Bordeaux, the Hague, Copenhagen,
 Wait at Valparaiso, Rio Janeiro, Panama.

5

I see the tracks of the railroads of the earth,
 I see them in Great Britain, I see them in Europe,
 I see them in Asia and in Africa.

I see the electric telegraphs of the earth,
 I see the filaments of the news of the wars, deaths, losses, gains,
 passions, of my race.

I see the long river-stripes of the earth,
 I see the Amazon and the Paraguay.
 I see the four great rivers of China, the Amour, the Yellow
 River, the Yang-tse, and the Pearl.
 I see where the Seine flows, and where the Danube, the Loire, the
 Rhone, and the Guadalquivir flow,
 I see the windings of the Volga, the Dnieper, the Oder,
 I see the Tuscan going down the Arno, and the Venetian along
 the Po,
 I see the Greek seaman sailing out of Egina Bay.

6

I see the site of the old empire of Assyria, and that of Persia, and
 that of India,
 I see the falling of the Ganges over the high rim of Saukara.
 I see the place of the idea of the Deity incarnated by avatars in
 human forms,
 I see the spots of the successions of priests on the earth, oracles,
 sacrificers, brahmins, sabians, llamas, monks, multis, ex-
 horters,
 I see where druids walk'd the groves of Mona, I see the mistletoe
 and vervain,
 I see the temples of the deaths of the bodies of gods, I see the
 old signifiers,

I see Christ eating the bread of His last supper in the midst of
 youths and old persons,
 I see where the strong divine young man the Hercules toil'd
 faithfully and long and then died,
 I see the place of the innocent rich life and hapless fate of the
 beautiful nocturnal son, the full-limb'd Bacchus,
 I see Kneph, blooming, drest in blue, with the crown of feathers
 on his head,
 I see Hermes, unsuspected, dying, well-belov'd, saying to the
 people, *Do not weep for me,*
This is not my true country. I have lived banish'd from my true
country, I now go back there,
I return to the celestial sphere where every one goes in his turn.

7

I see the battle-fields of the earth, grass grows upon them and
 blossoms and corn,
 I see the tracks of ancient and modern expeditions.
 I see the nameless masonries, venerable messages of the unknown
 events, heroes, records of the earth.
 I see the places of the sagas,
 I see pine-trees and fir-trees torn by northern blasts,
 I see granite boulders and cliffs, I see green meadows and lakes,
 I see the burial cairns of Scandinavian warriors,
 I see them raised high with stones by the marge of restless oceans,
 that the dead men's spirits when they wearied of their quiet
 graves might rise up through the mounds and gaze on the
 tossing billows, and be refresh'd by storms, immensity,
 liberty, action.
 I see the steppes of Asia
 I see the tumult of Mongolia, I see the tents of Kalnucks and
 Baskirs,
 I see the nomadic tribes with herds of oxen and cows,
 I see the table-lands notch'd with ravines, I see the jungles and
 deserts
 I see the camel, the wild steed, the bustard, the fat-tail'd sheep,
 the antelope, and the burrowing wolf.
 I see the highlands of Abyssinia,
 I see flocks of goats feeding, and see the fig-tree, tamarind, date,
 And see fields of teff-wheat and places of verdure and gold.

I see the Brazilian vaquero,
I see the Bolivian ascending Mount Sorata,
I see the Wacho crossing the plains, I see the incomparable ride
of horses with his lasso on his arm,
I see over the pampas the pursuit of wild cattle for their hides.

8

I see the regions of snow and ice,
I see the sharp eyed Samoiede and the Finn,
I see the seal-seeker in his boat poised on his lance,
I see the Siberian on his slight built sledge drawn by dogs.
I see the porpoise-hunters, I see the whale-crew of the South
Pacific and the North Atlantic.
I see the cliffs, glaciers, torrents, valleys, of Switzerland—I mark
the long winters and the isolation.

9

I see the cities of the earth and make myself at random a part of
them,
I am a real Parisian,
I am a habitan of Vienna, St. Peterburg, Berlin, Constantinople,
I am of Adelaide, Sidney, Melbourne,
I am of London, Manchester, Bristol, Edinburgh, Limerick,
I am of Madrid, Cadiz, Barcelona, Oporto, Lyons, Brussels,
Berne, Frankfort, Stuttgart, Turin, Florence,
I belong in Moscow, Cracow, Warsaw, or northward in Christiania
or Stockholm, or in Siberian Irkutsk, or in some street in
Iceland,
I descend upon all those cities, and rise from them again.

10

I see vapours exaling from unexplored countries,
I see the savage types, the bow and arrow, the poison'd splint,
the fetich, and the obi.
I see African and Asiatic towns,
I see Algiers, Tripoli, Derne, Mogadore, Timbuctoo, Monrovia,
I see the swarms of Pekin, Canton, Benares, Delhi, Calcutta,
Tokio,
I see the Kruman in his hut, and the Dahoman and Ashantee-
man in their huts,

I see the Turk smoking opium in Aleppo,
 I see the picturesque crowds at the fairs of Khiva and those of
 Herat,
 I see Teheran, I see Muscat and Medina, and the intervening
 sands, I see the caravans toiling onward,
 I see Egypt and the Egyptians, I see the pyramids and obelisks,
 I look on chisell'd histories, records of conquering kings, dynasties,
 cut in slabs of sand-stone, or on granite-blocks,
 I see at Memphis mummy-pits containing mummies embalm'd,
 swathed in linen cloth, lying there many centuries,
 I look on the fall'n Theban, the large-ball'd eyes, the side-droop-
 ing neck, the hands fold'd across the breast.

I see all the menials of the earth, labouring,
 I see all the prisoners in the prisons,
 I see the defective human bodies of the earth,
 The blind, the deaf and dumb, idiots, hunchbacks, lunatics,
 The pirates, thieves, betrayers, murderers, slave-makers of the
 earth,
 The helpless infants, and the helpless old men and women.

I see male and female everywhere,
 I see the serene brotherhood of philosophers,
 I see the constructiveness of my race,
 I see the results of the perseverance and industry of my race,
 I see ranks, colours, barbarisms, civilisations, I go among them,
 I mix indiscriminately,
 And I salute all the inhabitants of the earth.

II

You whoever you are!
 You daughter or son of England!
 You of the mighty Slavic tribes and empires! you Russ in Russia!
 You dim-descended, black, divine-soul'd African, large, fine-
 headed, nobly-form'd, superbly destin'd, on equal terms
 with me!
 You Norwegian! Swede! Dane! Icelander! you Prussian!
 You Spaniard of Spain! you Portuguese!
 You Frenchwoman and Frenchman of France!
 You Belge! you liberty-lover of the Netherlands! (you stock
 whence I myself have descended);
 You sturdy Austrian! you Lombard! Hun! Bohemian! farmer
 of Styria!

You neighbour of the Danube!
 You working-man of the Rhine, the Elbe, or the Weser!
 working-woman too!
 You Sardinian! you Bavarian! Swabian! Saxon! Wallachian!
 Bulgarian!
 You Roman! Neapolitan! you Greek!
 You lithe matador in the arena at Seville!
 You mountaineer living lawlessly on the Taurus or Caucasus!
 You Bokh horse herd watching your mares and stallions feeding!
 You beautiful-bodied Persian at full speed in the saddle shooting
 arrows to the mark!
 You Chinaman and Chinawoman of China! you Tartar of
 Tartary!
 You women of the earth subordinated at your tasks!
 You Jew journeying in your old age through every risk to stand
 once on Syrian ground!
 You other Jews waiting in all lands for your Messiah!
 You thoughtful Armenian pondering by some stream of the
 Euphrates! you peering amid the ruins of Nineveh! you
 ascending Mount Ararat!
 You foot-worn pilgrim welcoming the far-away sparkle of the
 minarets of Mecca!
 You sheiks along the stretch from Suez to Bab-el mandeb ruling
 your families and tribes!
 You olive-grower tending your fruit on fields of Nazareth,
 Damascus, or Lake Tiberias!
 You Thibet trader on the wide inland or bargaining in the shops
 of Lassa!
 You Japanese man or woman! you liver in Madagascar, Ceylon,
 Sumatra, Borneo!
 All you continentals of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, in-
 different of place!
 All you on the numberless islands of the archipelagos of the sea!
 And you of centuries hence when you listen to me!
 And you each and everywhere whom I specify not, but include
 just the same!
 Health to you! good will to you all, from me and America sent!

Each of us inevitable,
 Each of us limitless—each of us with his or her right upon the
 earth,
 Each of us allow'd the eternal purports of the earth,
 Each of us here as divinely as any is here.

12

You Hottentot with clicking palate! you woolly-hair'd hordes!
 You own'd persons dropping sweat-drops or blood-drops!
 You human forms with the fathomless ever-impressive counten-
 ances of brutes!

You poor koboo whom the meanest of the rest look down upon
 for all your glimmering language and spirituality!

You dwarf'd Kamtschatkan, Greenlander, Lapp!

You Austral negro, naked, red, sooty, with protrusive lip,
 grovelling, seeking your food!

You Caffre, Berber, Soudanese!

You haggard, uncouth, untutor'd Bedowee!

You plague-swarm in Madras, Nankin, Kaubul, Cairo!

You benighted rover of Amazonia! you Patagonian! you
 Feejeean!

I do not prefer others so very much before you either.

I do not say one word against you, away back there where you stand,
 (You will come forward in due time to my side).

13

My spirit has pass'd in compassion and determination around the
 whole earth,

I have look'd for equals and lovers and found them ready for me
 in all lands,

I think some divine rapport has equalised me with them.

You vapours, I think I have risen with you, moved away to
 distant continents, and fallen down there, for reasons,

I think I have blown with you you winds;

You waters I have finger'd every shore with you,

I have run through what any river or strait of the globe has run
 through,

I have taken my stand on the bases of peninsulas and on the
 high embedded rocks, to cry thence:

Salut au monde!

What cities the light or warmth penetrates I penetrate those
 cities myself,

All islands to which birds wing their way I wing my way myself,

Toward you all, in America's name,

I raise high the perpendicular hand, I make the signal,

To remain after me in sight for ever,

For all the haunts and homes of men.

SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD

I

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.

The earth, that is sufficient,
I do not want the constellations any nearer,
I know they are very well where they are,
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

(Still here I carry my old delicious burdens, •
I carry them, men and women, I carry them with me wherever
I go,
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them,
I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them in return.)

You road I enter upon and look around, I believe you are not all
that is here,
I believe that much unseen is also here.

Here the profound lesson of reception, nor preference nor denial,
The black with his woolly head, the felon, the diseas'd, the
illiterate person, are not denied;
The birth, the hasting after the physician, the beggar's tramp,
the drunkard's stagger, the laughing party of mechanics,
The escaped youth, the rich person's carriage, the fop, the eloping
couple,
The early market-man, the hearse, the moving of furniture into
the town, the return back from the town,

They pass, I also pass, anything passes, none can be interdicted,
None but are accepted, none but shall be dear to me.

3

You air that serves me with breath to speak!
You objects that call from diffusion my meanings and give them
shape!
You light that wraps me and all things in delicate equable
showers!
You paths worn in the irregular hollows by the roadsides!
I believe you are latent with unseen existences, you are so dear
to me.

You flagg'd walks of the cities! you strong curbs at the edges!
You ferries! you planks and posts of wharves! you timber-lined
sides! you distant ships!
You rows of houses! you window-pierc'd façades! you roofs!
You porches and entrances! you copings and iron guards!
You windows whose transparent shells might expose so much!
You doors and ascending steps! you arches!
You grey stones of interminable pavements! you trodden
crossings!
From all that has touch'd you I believe you have imparted to
yourselves, and now would impart the same secretly to me,
From the living and the dead you have peopled your impassive
surfaces, and the spirits thereof would be evident and
amicable with me.

4

The earth expanding right hand and left hand,
The picture alive, every part in its best light,
The music falling in where it is wanted, and stopping where it is
not wanted,
The cheerful voice of the public road, the gay fresh sentiment of
the road.

O highway I travel, do you say to me, *Do not leave me?*
Do you say, *Venture not—if you leave me you are lost?*
Do you say, *I am already prepared, I am well-beaten and un-*
denied, adhere to me?

O public road, I say back I am not afraid to leave you, yet I love
you.

You express me better than I can express myself,
You shall be more to me than my poem.

I think heroic deeds were all conceiv'd in the open air, and the
free poems also,
I think I could stop here myself and do miracles,
I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like, and what
even beholds me shall like me.
I think whoever I see must be happy,

5

From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary
lines,
Going where I list, my own master total and absolute,
Listening to others, considering well what they say,
Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,
Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of the holds
that would hold me.

I inhale great draughts of space,
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south are
mine.

I am larger, better than I thought,
I did not know I held so much goodness.

All seems beautiful to me,
I can repeat over to men and women You have done such good
to me I would do the same to you,
I will recruit for myself and you as I go,
I will scatter myself among men and women as I go,
I will toss a new gladness and roughness among them,
Whoever denies me it shall not trouble me,
Whoever accepts me he or she shall be blessed and shall bless me.

6

Now if a thousand perfect men were to appear it would not amaze
me,
Now if a thousand beautiful forms of women appear'd it would
not astonish me.

Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons;
It is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth,

Here a great personal deed has room,
 (Such a deed seizes upon the hearts of the whole race of men,
 Its effusion of strength and will overwhelms law and mocks all
 authority and all argument against it).

Here is the test of wisdom,
 Wisdom is not finally tested in schools,
 Wisdom cannot be pass'd from one having it to another not
 having it,
 Wisdom is of the soul, is not susceptible of proof, is its own proof,
 Applies to all stages and objects and qualities and is content,
 Is the certainty of the reality and immortality of things, and the
 excellencé of things;
 Something there is in the float of the sight of things that provokes
 it out of the soul.

Now I re-examine philosophies and religions,
 They may prove well in lecture-rooms, yet not prove at all under
 the spacious clouds and along the landscape and flowing
 currents.

Here is realization,
 Here is a man talbed- he realises here what he has in him,
 The past, the future, majesty, love--if they are vacant of you,
 you are vacant of them.

Only the kernel of every object nourishes;
 Where is he who tears out the husks for you and me?
 Where is he that undoes stratagems and envelopes for you and
 me?

Here is adhesiveness, it is not previously fashion'd, it is apropos;
 Do you know what it is as you pass to be loved by strangers?
 Do you know the talk of those turning eye-halls?

7

Here is the efflux of the soul,
 The efflux of the soul comes from within through crabower'd
 gates, ever provoking questions,
 These yearnings why are they? these thoughts in the darkness
 why are they?
 Why are there men and women that while they are nigh me the
 sunlight expands my blood?

Why when they leave me do my pennants of joy sink flat and lank?

Why are there trees I never walk under but large and melodious thoughts descend upon me?

(I think they hang there winter and summer on those trees and always drop fruit as I pass);

What is it I interchange so suddenly with strangers?

What with some driver as I ride on the seat by his side?

What with some fisherman drawing his seine by the shore as I walk by and pause?

What gives me to be free to a woman's and man's good will?
what gives them to be free to mine?

8

The efflux of the soul is happiness, here is happiness,
I think it pervades the open air, waiting at all times,
Now it flows unto us, we are rightly charged.

Here rises the fluid and attaching character,
The fluid and attaching character is the freshness and sweetness
of man and woman,

(The herbs of the morning sprout no fresher and sweeter every
day out of the roots of themselves, than it sprouts fresh
and sweet continually out of itself).

Toward the fluid and attaching character exudes the sweat of the
love of young and old.

From it falls distill'd the charm that mocks beauty and attain-
ments,

Toward it heaves the shuddering, longing ache of contact.

9

Allons! whoever you are come travel with me!
Travelling with me you find what never tires.

The earth never tires,

The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first, Nature is rude
and incomprehensible at first,

Be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well
envelop'd,

I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words
can tell.

Allons! we must not stop here,
 However sweet these laid-up stores, however convenient this
 dwelling we cannot remain hère,
 However shelter'd this port and however calm these waters we
 must not anchor here,
 However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us we are
 permitted to receive it but a little while.

10

Allons! the inducements shall be greater,
 We will sail pathless and wild seas,
 We will go where winds blow, waves dash, and the Yankee
 clipper speeds by under full sail.

Allons! with power, liberty, the earth, the elements,
 Health, defiance, gaiety, self-esteem, curiosity;
 Allons! from all formules!
 From your formules, O bat eyed and materialistic priests.

The stale cadaver blocks up the passage—the burial waits no
 longer.

Allons! yet take warning!
 He travelling with me needs the best blood, thews, endurance,
 None may come to the trial till he or she bring courage and
 health,
 Come not here if you have already spent the best of yourself,
 Only those may come who come in sweet and determin'd bodies,
 No diseas'd person, no rum-drinker or venereal taint is permitted
 here.
 (I and mine do not convince by arguments, similes, rhymes,
 We convince by our presence.)

11

Listen! I will be honest with you,
 I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes,
 These are the days that must happen to you:
 You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,
 You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve,
 You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd, you hardly
 settle yourself to satisfaction before you are call'd by an
 irresistible call to depart,

You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings of those
 who remain behind you,
 What beckonings of love you receive you shall only answer with
 passionate kisses of parting,
 You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their reach'd
 hands toward you.

12

Allons! after the great Companions, and to belong to them!
 They too are on the road—they are the swift and majestic men --
 they are the greatest women,
 Enjoyers of calms of seas and storms of seas,
 Sailors of many a ship, walkers of many a mile of land,
 Habitues of many distant countries, habitues of far-distant
 dwellings,
 Trusters of men and women, observers of cities, solitary toilers,
 Pausers and contemplators of tufts, blossoms, shells of the
 shore,
 Dancers at wedding-dances, kissers of babes, tender helpers of
 children, bearers of children,
 Soldiers of revolts, standers by gaping graves, lowerers-down of
 coffins,
 Journeyers over consecutive seasons, over the years, the curious
 years each emerging from that which preceded it,
 Journeyers as with companions, namely their own diverse phases,
 Forth-steppers from the latent unrealised baby-days,
 Journeyers gaily with their own youth, journeyers with their
 bearded and well-gram'd manhood,
 Journeyers with their womanhood, ample, unsurpass'd, content,
 Journeyers with their own sublime old age of manhood or woman-
 hood).
 Old age, calm, expanded, broad with the haughty breadth of the
 universe,
 Old age, flowing free with the delicious near-by freedom of death.

13

Allons! to that which is endless as it was beginningless,
 To undergo much, tramps of days, rests of nights,
 To merge all in the travel they tend to, and the days and nights
 they tend to,
 Again to merge them in the start of superior journey,
 To see nothing anywhere but what you may reach it and pass it,

To conceive no time, however distant, but what you may reach it
 and pass it,
 To look up or down no road but it stretches and waits for you,
 however long but it stretches and waits for you,
 To see no being, not God's or any, but you also go thither,
 To see no possession but you may possess it, enjoying all without
 labour or purchase, abstracting the least yet not abstracting
 one particle of it,
 To take the best of the farmer's farm and the rich man's elegant
 villa, and the chaste blessings of the well-married couple,
 and the fruits of orchards and flowers of gardens,
 To take to your use out of the compact cities as you pass through,
 To carry buildings and streets with you afterward wherever you
 go,
 To gather the minds of men out of their brains as you encounter
 them, to gather the love out of their hearts,
 To take your lovers on the road with you, for all that you leave
 them behind you.
 To know the universe itself as a road, as many roads, as roads for
 travelling souls.

All parts away for the progress of souls,
 All religion, all solid things, arts, governments—all that was or is
 apparent upon this globe or any globe, falls into niches and
 corners before the procession of souls along the grand roads
 of the universe.

Of the progress of the souls of men and women along the grand
 roads of the universe, all other progress is the needed
 emblem and sustenance.

Forever alive, forever forward,
 Stately, solemn, sad, withdrawn, baffled, mad, turbulent, feeble
 dissatisfied.
 Desperate, proud, fond, sick, accepted by men, rejected by men
 They go! they go! I know that they go, but I know not where
 they go,
 But I know that they go toward the best—toward something
 great.

Whoever you are, come forth! or man or woman come forth!
 You must not stay sleeping and dallying there in the house
 though you built it, or though it has been built for you.

Out of the dark confinement! out from behind the screen!
It is useless to protest, I know all and expose it.

Behold through you as bad as the rest,
Through the laughter, dancing, dining, supping of people,
Inside of dresses and ornaments, inside of those wash'd and
trimm'd faces,
Behold a secret silent loathing and despair.

No husband, no wife, no friend, trusted to hear the confession,
Another self, a duplicate of every one, skulking and hiding it goes,
Formless and wordless through the streets of the cities, polite
and bland in the parlours,
In the cars of railroads, in steamboats, in the public assembly,
Home to the houses of men and women, at the table, in the bed-
room, everywhere,
Smartly attired, countenance smiling, form upright, death under
the breast-bones, hell under the skull-bones,
Under the broadcloth and gloves, under the ribbons and artificial
flowers,
Keeping fair with the customs, speaking not a syllable of itself,
Speaking of any thing else but never of itself.

14

Allons! through struggles and wars!
The goal that was named cannot be countermanded.

Have the past struggles succeeded?
What has succeeded? yourself? your nation? Nature?
Now understand me well— it is provided in the essence of things
that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall
come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.

My call is the call of battle, I nourish active rebellion,
He going with me must go well arm'd,
He going with me goes often with spare diet, poverty, angry
enemies, desertions.

15

Allons! the road is before us!
It is safe—I have tried it—my own feet have tried it well—be
not detain'd!

Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten, and the book on the
shelf unopen'd!

Let the tools remain in the workshop! let the money remain
unearn'd!

Let the school stand! mind, not the cry of the teacher!

Let the preacher preach in his pulpit! let the lawyer plead in the
court, and the judge expound the law.

Comrade, I give you my hand!

I give you my love more precious than money,

I give you myself before preaching or law;

Will you give me yourself? will you come travel with me?

Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY

1

FLOOD-TIDE below me! I see you face to face!
Clouds of the west--sun there half an hour high--I see you
also face to face.

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how
curious you are to me!
On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, return-
ing home, are more curious to me than you suppose,
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are
more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might
suppose.

2

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all hours or
the day,
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme, myself disintegrated,
every one disintegrated yet part of the scheme,
The similitudes of the past and those of the future,
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings,
on the walk in the street and the passage over the river,
The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me far away,
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and
them,
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.

Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from shore to
shore,
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide,
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and
the heights of Brooklyn to the south and east,
Others will see the islands large and small;
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun
half an hour high,

A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence,
 others will see them,
 Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling-
 back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

J

It avails not, time nor place — distance avails not,
 I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so
 many generations hence,
 Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,
 Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,
 Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the
 bright flow, I was refresh'd,
 Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift
 current, I stood yet was hurried,
 Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-
 stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old,
 Watched the Twelfth-month sea gulls, saw them high in the air
 floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,
 Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and
 left the rest in strong shadow,
 Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the
 south,
 Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water
 Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,
 Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the shape of
 my head in the sunlit water,
 Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and south-westward,
 Look'd on the vapour as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,
 Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,
 Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,
 Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at
 anchor,
 The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars,
 The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender
 serpentine pennants,
 The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilot-
 houses,
 The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl
 of the wheels,

The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,
 The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, ' ' frolicsome crests and glistening,
 The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the grey walls of the granite storehouses by the docks,
 On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug closely flank'd on each side by the barges, the hay-boat, the belated lighter,
 On the neighbouring shore the fires from the foundry
 • chimneys burning high and glaringly into the night,
 Casting their flicker of black contrasted with wild red and yellow light over the tops of houses, and down into the clefts of streets.

4

These and all else were to me the same as they are to you.
 I loved well those cities, loved well the stately and rapid river,
 The men and women I saw were all near to me,
 Others the same- others who look back on me because I look'd forward to them
 (The time will come, though I stop here to-day and to-night).

5

What is it then between us?
 What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?
 Whatever it is, it avails not-- distance avails not, and place avails not,
 I too lived, Brooklyn of ample hills was mine.
 I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan Island, and bathed in the waters around it,
 I too felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me,
 In the day among crowds of people sometimes they came upon me,
 In my walks home late at night or as I lay in my bed they came upon me,
 I too had been struck from the float for ever held in solution,
 I too had receiv'd identity by my body,
 That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew
 I should be of my body.

6

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,
 The dark threw its patches down upon me also,
 The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious,
 My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality
 meagre?

Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,
 I am he who knew what it was to be evil,
 I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,
 Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole, grudg'd,
 Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,
 Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant,
 The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting in me,
 The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous wish, not
 wanting,
 Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none of
 those wanting,
 Was one with the rest, the nays and haps of the rest,
 Was call'd by my highest name by clear loud voices of young
 men as they saw me approaching or passing,
 Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or the negligent leaning
 of their flesh against me as I sat,
 Saw many I loved in the street or ferry-boat or public assembly,
 yet never told them a word,
 Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing, gnaw-
 ing, sleeping,
 Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor or actress,
 The same old rôle, the rôle that is what we make it, as great as
 we like,
 Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

7

Closer yet I approach you,
 What thought you have of me now, I had as much of you—I
 laid in my stores in advance,
 I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were born.

Who was to know what should come home to me?
 Who knows but I am enjoying this?
 Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at
 you now, for all you cannot see me?

8

Ah, what can ever be more stately and admirable to me than
mast-hemm'd Manhattan?

River and sunset and scallop-edg'd waves of flood-tide?

The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the
twilight, and the belated lighter?

What gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand, and
• with voices I love call me promptly and loudly by my
highest name as I approach?

What is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or
man that looks in my face?

Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you?

We understand then do we not?

What I promis'd without mentioning it, have you not accepted?

What the study could not teach—what the preaching could not
accomplish is accomplished, is it not?

9

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-
tide!

Flow on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!

Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendour me,
or the men and women generations after me!

Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!

Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills
of Brooklyn!

Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and
answers!

Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!

Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or public
assembly!

Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me
by my highest name!

Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or
actress!

Play the old rôle, the rôle that is great or small according as one
makes it!

Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown
ways be looking upon you!

Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet
haste with the hasting current;

Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in
the air;

Receive the summer sky, you water, and faithfully hold it till all
downcast eyes have time to take it from you!

Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or any
one's head, in the sunlit water!

Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down, white-sail'd
schooners, sloops, lighters!

Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lower'd at sunset!

Burn high your fires, foundry thimneys! cast black shadows at
nightfall! cast red and yellow light over the tops of the
houses!

Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are,

You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul,

About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung our
divinest aromas,

Thrive, cities—bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and
sufficient rivers,

Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual,

Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful
ministers,

We receive you with true sense at last, and are insatiate hence-
forward,

Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold yourselves
from us,

We use you, and do not cast you aside—we plant you permanently
within us,

We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection in you
also,

You furnish your parts toward eternity,

Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.

SONG OF THE ANSWERER

1

Now list^o to my morning's romanza, I tell the signs of the
Answerer,
To the cities and farms I sing as they spread in the sunshine
before me.

A young man comes to me bearing a message from his brother,
How shall the young man know the whether and when of his
brother?
Tell him to send me the signs.

And I stand before the young man face to face, and take his
right hand in my left hand and his left hand in my right hand,
And I answer for his brother and for men, and I answer for him
that answers for all, and send these signs.

Him all wait for, him all yield up to, his word is decisive and
final,
In him they accept, in him love, in him perceive themselves as
amid light,
Him they immerse and he immerses them.

Beautiful women, the haughtiest nations, laws, the landscape,
people, animals,
The profound earth and its attributes and the unquiet ocean (so
tell I my morning's romanza),
All enjoyments and properties and money, and whatever money
will buy,
The best farms, others toiling and planting and he unavoidably
reaps,
The noblest and costliest cities, others grading and building and
he domiciles there,
Nothing for any one but what is for him, near and far are for
him, the ships in the offing,
The perpetual shows and marches on land are for him if they
are for anybody.

He puts things in their attitudes,
He puts to-day out of himself with plasticity and love,

He places his own times, reminiscences, parents, brothers and sisters, associations, employment, politics, so that the rest never shame them afterward, nor assume to command them.

He is the Answerer,
What can be answer'd he answers, and what cannot be answer'd
he shows how it cannot be answer'd.

A man is a summons and challenge,
(It is vain to skulk—do you hear that mocking and laughter?
do you hear the ironical echoes?)

Books, friendships, philosophers, priests, action, pleasure, pride,
beat up and down seeking to give satisfaction,
He indicates the satisfaction, and indicates them that beat up
and down also.

Whichever the sex, whatever the season or place, he may go
freshly and gently and safely by day or by night,
He has the pass-key of hearts, to him the response of the prying
of hands on the knobs.

His welcome is universal, the flow of beauty is not more welcome
or universal than he is,
The person he favours by day or sleeps with at night is blessed.

Every existence has its idiom, everything has an idiom and
tongue,

He resolves all tongues into his own and bestows it upon men,
and any man translates, and any man translates himself also,
One part does not counteract another part, he is the joiner, he
sees how they join.

He says indifferently and alike *How are you, friend?* to the
President at his levee.

And he says *Good-day, my brother*, to Cudge that hoes in the
sugar-field,

And both understand him and know that his speech is right.

He walks with perfect ease in the capitol,
He walks among the Congress, and one Representative says to
another, *Here is our equal appearing and new.*

Then the mechanics take him for a mechanic,
And the soldiers suppose him to be a soldier, and the sailors that
he has follow'd the sea,

And the authors take him for an author, and the artists for an artist,
And the labourers perceive he could labour with them and love them,
No matter what the work is, that he is the one to follow it or has follow'd it,
No matter what the nation, that he might find his brothers and sisters there.

The English believe he comes of their English stock,
A Jew to the Jew he seems, a Russ to the Russ, usual and near,
removed from none.

Whoever he looks at in the traveller's coffee-house claims him,
The Italian or Frenchman is sure, the German is sure, the Spaniard is sure, and the island Cuban is sure,
The engineer, the deck-hand on the great lakes, or on the Mississippi or St. Lawrence or Sacramento, or Hudson or Pamanok sound, claims him.

The gentleman of perfect blood acknowledges his perfect blood,
The insulter, the prostitute, the angry person, the beggar, see themselves in the ways of him, he strangely transmutes them,
They are not vile any more, they hardly know themselves they are so grown.

2

The indications and tally of time,
Perfect sanity shows the master among philosophs,
Time, always without break, indicates it-elf in parts,
What always indicates the poet is the crowd of the pleasant company of singers, and their words,
The words of the singers are the hours or minutes of the light or dark, but the words of the maker of poems are the general light and dark,
The maker of poems settles justice, reality, immortality,
His insight and power encircle things and the human race,
He is the glory and extract thus far of things and of the human race.

The singers do not beget, only the Poet begets,
The singers are welcom'd, understood, appear often enough, but rare has the day been, likewise the spot, of the birth of the maker of poems, the Answerer

(Not every century nor every five centuries has contain'd such a day, for all its names).

The singers of successive hours of centuries may have ostensible names, but the name of each of them is one of the singers,
The name of each is, eye-singer, ear-singer, head-singer, sweet-singer, night-singer, parlour-singer, love-singer, weird-singer, or something else.

All this time and at all times wait the words of true poems,
The words of true poems do not merely please,
The true poets are not followers of beauty but the august masters of beauty;
The greatness of sons is the exuding of the greatness of mothers and fathers.
The words of true poems are the tuft and final applause of science.

Divine instinct, breadth of vision, the law of reason, health, rudeness of body, withdrawnness,
Gaiety, sun-fan, air-sweetness, such are some of the words of poems.

The sailor and traveller underlie the maker of poems, the Answerer,
The boulder, geometer, chemist, anatomist, phrenologist, artist, all these underlie the maker of poems, the Answerer.

The words of the true poems give you more than poems,
They give you to form for yourself poems, religions, politics, war, peace, behaviour, histories, essays, daily life, and everything else,
They balance ranks, colours, races, creeds, and the sexes,
They do not seek beauty, they are sought,
For ever touching them or close upon them follows beauty, longing, fain, love-sick.

They prepare for death, yet are they not the finish, but rather the outset,
They bring none to his or her terminus or to be content and full, Whom they take they take into space to behold the birth of stars, to learn one of the meanings,
To launch off with absolute faith, to sweep through the ceaseless rings and never be quiet again.

OUR OLD FEUILLAGE

ALWAYS our old feuillage!

Always Florida's green peninsula—always the priceless delta of Louisiana—always the cotton fields of Alabama and Texas,

Always California's golden hills and hollows, and the silver mountains of New Mexico—always soft-breath'd Cuba,

Always the vast slope drain'd by the Southern sea, inseparable with the slopes drain'd by the Eastern and Western seas,

The area the eighty-third year of these States, the three and a half millions of square miles

The eighteen thousand miles of sea coast and bay coast on the main, the thirty thousand miles of river navigation,

The seven millions of distinct families and the same number of dwellings—always these, and more, branching forth into numberless branches,

Always the free range and diversity—always the continent of Democracy;

Always the prairies, pastures, forests, vast cities, travellers, Kanada, the snows;

Always these compact lands tied at the hips with the belt stringing the huge oval lakes;

Always the West with strong native persons, the increasing density there, the habitants, friendly, threatening, ironical, scorning invaders;

All sights, South, North, East—all deeds, promiscuously done at all times,

All characters, movements, growths, a few noticed, myriads unnoticed,

Through Manhattan's streets I walking, these things gathering, On interior rivers by night in the glare of pine knots, steamboats wooding up,

Sunlight by day on the valley of the Susquehanna, and on the valleys of the Potomac and Rappahannock, and the valleys of the Roanoke and Delaware,

In their northerly wilds beasts of prey haunting the Adirondacks the hills, or lapping the Saginaw waters to drink,

In a lonesome inlet a sheldrake lost from the flock, sitting on the water rocking silently,

In farmers' barns oxen in the stable, their harvest labour done,
they rest standing, they are too tired,
Afar on arctic ice the she-walrus lying drowsily while her cubs
play around,
The hawk sailing where men have not yet sail'd, the farthest
polar sea, ripply, crystalline, open, beyond the floes,
White drift spooning ahead where the ship in the tempest dashes,
On solid land what is done in cities as the belis strike midnight
together,
In primitive woods the sounds there also sounding, the howl of
the wolf, the scream of the panther, and the hoarse bellow of
the elk,
In winter beneath the hard blue ice of Moosehead lake, in
summer visible through the clear waters, the great trout
swimming,
In lower latitudes in warmer air in the Carolinas the large black
buzzard floating slowly high beyond the tree-tops,
Below, the red cedar festoon'd with tylandria, the pines, and
cypresses growing out of the white sand that spreads far
and flat,
Rude boats descending the big Pedee, climbing plants, parasites
with colour'd flowers and berries enveloping huge trees,
The waving drapery on the live-oak trailing long and low, noise-
lessly waved by the wind,
The camp of Georgia wagoners just after dark, the supper-fires
and the cooking and eating by whites and negroes,
Thirty or forty great wagons, the mules, cattle, horses, feeding
from troughs,
The shadows, gleams, up under the leaves of the old sycamore-
trees, the flames with the black smoke from the pitch-pine
curling and rising,
Southern fishermen fishing, the sounds and inlets of North
Carolina's coast, the shad-fishery and the herring-fishery,
the large sweep-seines, the windlasses on shore work'd by
horses, the clearing, curing, and packing-houses;
Deep in the forest in piney woods turpentine dropping from the
incisions in the trees, there are the turpentine works,
There are the negroes at work in good health, the ground in all
directions is cover'd with pine straw;
In Tennessee and Kentucky slaves busy in the coalings, at the
forge, by the furnace-blaze, or at the corn-shucking,
In Virginia, the planter's son returning after a long absence,
joyfully welcom'd and kiss'd by the aged mulatto nurse,

On rivers boatmen safely moor'd at nightfall in their boats under
 shelter of high banks,
 Some of the younger men dance to the sound of the bangle
 riddle, others sit on the gunwale smoking and talking,
 Late in the afternoon the mocking-bird, the American mimic,
 singing in the Great Dismal Swamp,
 There are the greenish waters, the resinous odour, the plentiful
 moss, the cypress-tree, and the juniper-tree;
 Northward, young men of Mannahatta, the target company
 • from an excursion returning home at evening, the musket-
 muzzles all bear bunches of flowers presented by women;
 Children at play, or on his father's lap a young boy fallen asleep
 (how his lips move! how he smiles in his sleep!);
 The scout riding on horseback over the plains west of the Missis-
 sippi, he ascends a knoll and sweeps his eyes around;
 California life, the miner, dress'd in his rude costume,
 the stanch California friendship, the sweet air, the graves
 one in passing meets solitary just aside the horse-path;
 Down in Texas the cotton-field, the negro cabins, drivers driving
 mules or oxen before rude carts, cotton bales piled on
 banks and wharves;
 Encircling all, vast-darting up and wide, the American Soul,
 with equal hemispheres, one Love, one Dilatation or Pride;
 In arrière the peace-talk with the Iroquois the aborigines, the
 calumet, the pipe of good-will, arbitration, and indorse-
 ment,
 The sachem blowing the smoke first toward the sun and then
 toward the earth,
 The drama of the scalp-dance enacted with painted faces and
 guttural exclamations,
 The setting out of the war-party, the long and stealthy march,
 The single file, the swinging hatchets, the surprise and slaughter
 of enemies;
 All the acts, scenes, ways, persons, attitudes of these States,
 reminiscences, institutions,
 All these States compact, every square mile of these States
 without excepting a particle;
 Me pleas'd, rambling in lanes and country fields, Paumanok's
 fields,
 Observing the spiral flight of two little yellow butterflies shuffling
 between each other, ascending high in the air,
 The darting swallow, the destroyer of insects, the fall traveller
 southward but returning northward early in the spring,

The country boy at the close of the day driving the herd of cows
 and shouting to them as they loiter to browse by the road-
 side,
 The city wharf, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston,
 New Orleans, San Francisco,
 The departing ships when the sailors heave at the capstan;
 Evening—me in my room—the setting sun,
 The setting summer sun shining in my open window, showing the
 swarm of flies, suspended, balancing in the air in the centre
 of the room, darting athwart, up and down, casting swift
 shadows in specks on the opposite wall where the shine is;
 The athletic American matron speaking in public to crowds of
 listeners,
 Males, females, immigrants, combinations, the copiousness, the
 individuality of the States, each for itself—the money-
 makers,
 Factories, machinery, the mechanical forces, the windlass, lever,
 pulley, all certainties,
 The certainty of space, increase, freedom, futurity,
 In space the sporades, the scatter'd islands, the stars--on the
 firm earth, the lands, my lands,
 O lands! all so dear to me - what you are (whatever it is), I
 putting it at random in these songs, become a part of that,
 whatever it is,
 Southward there, I screaming, with wings slow flapping, with the
 myriads of gulls wintering along the coasts of Florida,
 Otherways there atwixt the banks of the Arkansaw, the Rio
 Grande, the Nueres, the Brazos, the Tombigbee, the Red
 River, the Saskatchewan or the Osage, I with the spring
 waters laughing and skipping and running,
 Northward, on the sands, on some shallow bay of Paumanok, I
 with parties of snowy herons wading in the wet to seek
 worms and aquatic plants,
 Retreating, triumphantly twittering, the king-bird, from piercing
 the crow with its bill, for amusement—and I triumphantly
 twittering,
 The migrating flock of wild geese alighting in autumn to refresh
 themselves, the body of the flock feed, the sentinels outside
 move around with erect heads watching, and are from time
 to time reliev'd by other sentinels--and I feeding and
 taking turns with the rest,
 In Kanadian forests the moose, large as an ox, corner'd by
 hunters, rising desperately on his hind-feet, and plunging

with his fore-feet, the hoofs as sharp as knives—and I,
 plunging at the hunters, corner'd and desperate,
 In the Mannahatta, streets, piers, shipping, store-houses . . .
 the countless workmen working in the shops,
 And I too of the Mannahatta, singing thereof— and no less in
 myself than the whole of the Mannahatta in itself,
 Singing the song of These, my ever-united lands --my body no
 more inevitably united, part to part, and made out of a
 thousand diverse contributions one identity, any more than
 • my lands are inevitably united and made ONE IDENTITY;
 Nativities, climates, the grass of the great pastoral Plains,
 Cities, labours, death, animals, products, war, good and evil—
 these me,
 These affording, in all their particulars, the old feuillage to me
 and to America, how can I do less than pass the clay of
 the union of them, to afford the like to you?
 Whoever you are! how can I but offer you divine leaves, that
 you also be eligible as I am? •
 How can I but as here chanting, invite you for yourself to collect
 bouquets of the incomparable feuillage of these States?

A SONG OF JOYS

O to make the most jubilant song!
Full of music—full of manhood, womanhood, infancy!
Full of common employments—full of grain and trees.

O for the voices of animals—O for the swiftness and balance of
fishes!

O for the dropping of raindrops in a song!

O for the sunshine and motion of waves in a song!

O the joy of my spirit—it is uncaged—it darts like lightning!
It is not enough to have this globe or a certain time,
I will have thousands of globes and all time.

O the engineer's joys! to go with a locomotive!
To hear the hiss of steam, the merry shriek, the steam-whistle,
the laughing locomotive!
To push with resistless way and speed off in the distance.

O the gleesome saunter over fields and hillsides!
The leaves and flowers of the commonest weeds, the moist fresh
stillness of the woods,
The exquisite smell of the earth at daybreak, and all through
the forenoon.

O the horseman's and horsewoman's joys!
The saddle, the gallop, the pressure upon the seat, the cool
gurgling by the ears and hair.

O the fireman's joys!
I hear the alarm at dead of night,
I hear bells, shouts! I pass the crowd. I run!
The sight of the flames maddens me with pleasure.

O the joy of the strong-brawn'd fighter, towering in the arena in
perfect condition, conscious of power, thirsting to meet his
opponent.

O the joy of that vast elemental sympathy which only the human soul is capable of generating and emitting in steady and limitless floods.

O the mother's joys!

The watching, the endurance, the precious love, the anguish, the patiently yielded life.

O the joy of increase, growth, recuperation,

The joy of soothing and pacifying, the joy of concord and harmony.

O to go back to the place where I was born,

To hear the birds sing once more,

To ramble about the house and barn and over the fields once more,

And through the orchard and along the old lanes once more.

O to have been brought up on bays, lagoons, creeks, or along the coast,

To continue and be employ'd there all my life,

The briny and damp smell, the shore, the salt weeds exposed at low water,

The work of fishermen, the work of the eel-fisher and clam-fisher,

I come with my clam-rake and spade, I come with my eel-spear,

Is the tide out? I join the group of clam-diggers on the flats,

I laugh and work with them, I joke at my work like a mettlesome young man;

In winter I take my eel basket and eel-spear and travel out on foot on the ice—I have a small axe to cut holes in the ice,

Behold me well-clothed going gaily or returning in the afternoon, my brood of tough boys accompanying me,

My brood of grown and part-grown boys, who love to be with no one else so well as they love to be with me,

By day to work with me, and by night to sleep with me.

Another time in warm weather out in a boat, to lift the lobster-pots—here they are sunk with heavy stones (I know the buoys),

O the sweetness of the Fifth month morning upon the water as I row just before sunrise toward the buoys,

I pull the wicker pots up slantingly, the dark green lobsters are desperate with their claws as I take them out, I insert wooden pegs in the joints of their pincers,

I go to all the places one after another, and then row back to the shore,
There in a huge kettle of boiling water the lobsters shall be
boil'd till their colour becomes scarlet.

Another time mackerel-taking,
Voracious, mad for the hook, near the surface, they seem to fill
the water for miles;
Another time fishing for rock-fish in Chesapeake bay, I one of the
brown-faced crew;
Another time trailing for blue-fish off Paumanok, I stand with
braced body,
My left foot is on the gunwale, my right arm throws far out the
coils of slender rope,
In sight around me the quick veering and darting of fifty skiffs,
my companions

O boat on the rivers,
The voyage down the St. Lawrence, the superb scenery, the
steamers,
The ships sailing, the Thousand Islands, the occasional timber-
raft and the raftsmen with long reaching sweep-oars,
The little huts on the rafts, and the stream of smoke when they
cook supper at evening

(O something pernicious and dread!
Something far away from a puny and pious life!
Something unproved! something in a trance!
Something escaped from the anchorage and daving free.)

O to work in mines, or forging iron,
Foundry casting, the foundry itself, the rude high roof, the ample
and shadow'd space,
The furnace, the hot liquid pour'd out and running.

O to resume the joys of the soldier!
To feel the presence of a brave commanding officer -- to feel his
sympathy!
To behold his calmness -- to be warm'd in the rays of his smile!
To go to battle -- to hear the bugles play and the drums beat!
To hear the crash of artillery -- to see the glittering of the
bayonets and musket barrels in the sun!
To see men fall and die and not complain!

To taste the savage taste of blood—to be so devilish!
To gloat so over the wounds and deaths of the enemy.

O the whaleman's joys! O I cruise my old cruise again!
I feel the ship's motion under me, I feel the Atlantic breezes
fanning me,
I hear the cry again sent down from the mast-head, *There—she
blows!*

Again I spring up the rigging to look with the rest—we descend,
wild with excitement,

I leap in the lower'd boat, we row toward our prey where he lies,
We approach stealthy and silent, I see the mountainous mass,
lethargic, basking.

I see the harpooner standing up I see the weapon dart from his
vigorous arm;

O swim again far out in the ocean the wounded whale, settling,
running to windward, tows me,

Again I see him rise to breathe, we now close again,

I see a lance driven through his side, press'd deep, turn'd in
the wound,

Again we back off, I see him settle again, the life leaving him
fast,

As he rises he spouts blood, I see him swim in circles narrower
and narrower, swiftly cutting the water—I see him die,

He gives one convulsive leap in the centre of the circle, and then
falls flat and still in the bloody foam.

O the old manhood of me, my noblest joy of all!

My children and grand-children, my white hair and beard,

My largeness, calmness, majesty, out of the long stretch of my
life.

O ripen'd joy of womanhood! O happiness at last!

I am more than eighty years of age, I am the most venerable
mother,

How clear is my mind—how all people draw nigh to me!

What attractions are these beyond any before? what bloom
more than the bloom of youth?

What beauty is this that descends upon me and rises out of me?

O the orator's joys!

To inflate the chest, to roll the thunder of the voice out from the
ribs and throat,

To make the people rage, weep, hate, desire, with yourself,
To lead America—to quell America with a great tongue.

O the joy of my soul leaning pois'd on itself, receiving identity
through materials and loving them, observing characters
and absorbing them,

My soul vibrated back to me from them, from sight, hearing,
touch, reason, articulation, comparison, memory, and the
like,

The real life of my senses and flesh transcending my senses and
flesh,

My body done with materials, my sight done with my material
eyes,

Proved to me this day beyond cavil that it is not my material
eyes which finally see,

Nor my material body which finally loves, walks, laughs, shouts,
embraces, procreates.

O the farmer's joys!

Ohioan's, Illinoisian's, Wisconsinese', Kanadian's, Iowan's
Kansian's, Missourian's, Oregonese' joys!

To rise at peep of day and pass forth nimbly to work,

To plough land in the fall for winter-sown crops,

To plough land in the spring for maize,

To train orchards, to graft the trees, to gather apples in the fall.

O to bathe in the swimming-bath, or in a good place along shore,
To splash the water! to walk ankle-deep, or race naked along
the shore.

O to realise space!

The plenteousness of all, that there are no bounds,

To emerge and be of the sky, of the sun and moon and flying
clouds, as one with them.

O the joy of a manly self-hood!

To be servile to none, to defer to none, not to any tyrant known
or unknown,

To walk with erect carriage, a step springy and elastic,

To look with calm gaze or with a flashing eye,

To speak with a full and sonorous voice out of a broad chest,

To confront with your personality all the other personalities of
the earth,

Know'st thou the excellent joys of youth?
 Joys of the dear companions and of the merry word and laugh-
 ing face?
 Joy of the glad light-beaming day, joy of the wide-breathed
 games?
 Joy of sweet music, joy of the lighted ball-room and the dancers?
 Joy of the plenteous dinner, strong carouse, and drinking?

Yet O my soul supreme!
 Know'st thou the joys of pensive thought?
 Joys of the free and lonesome heart, the tender, gloomy heart?
 Joys of the solitary walk, the spirit how'd yet proud, the suffer-
 ing and the struggle?
 The agonistic throes, the ecstasies, joys of the solemn musings
 day or night?
 Joys of the thought of Death, the great spheres, Time and Space?
 Prophetic joys of better, loftier love's ideals, the divine wife,
 the sweet, eternal, perfect comrade?
 Joys all thine own undying one, joys worthy thee, O soul.

O while I live to be the ruler of life, not a slave,
 To meet life as a powerful conqueror,
 No fumes, no ennui, no more complaints or scornful criticisms,
 To these proud laws of the air, the water and the ground,
 proving my interior soul impregnable,
 And nothing exterior shall ever take command of me.

For not life's joys alone I sing, repeating—the joy of death!
 The beautiful touch of Death, soothing and benumbing a few
 moments, for reasons,
 Myself discharging my excrementitious body to be burn'd, or
 render'd to powder, or buried,
 My real body doubtless left to me for other spheres,
 My voided body nothing more to me, returning to the purifica-
 tions, further offices, eternal uses of the earth.

O to attract by more than attraction!
 How it is I know not—yet behold! the something which obeys
 none of the rest,
 It is offensive, never defensive—yet how magnetic it draws.

O to struggle against great odds, to meet enemies undaunted!
 To be entirely alone with them, to find how much one can stand!

To look strife, torture, prison, popular odium, face to face!
To mount the scaffold, to advance to the muzzles of guns with
perfect nonchalance!
To be indeed a God!

O to sail to sea in a ship!
To leave this steady unendurable land.
To leave the tiresome sameness of the streets, the sidewalks
and the houses,
To leave you, O you solid motionless land, and entering a ship,
To sail and sail and sail!

O to have life henceforth a poem of new joys!
To dance, clap hands, exult, shout, skip, leap, roll on, float on!
To be a sailor of the world bound for all ports,
A ship itself (see indeed these sails I spread to the sun and air),
A swift and swelling ship full of rich words, full of joys.

SONG OF THE BROAD-AXE

WEAPON shapely, naked, wan,
Head from the mother's bowels drawn,
Wooded flesh and metal bone, hush only one and lip only
one,
Grey-blue leaf by red heat grown, helve produced from a little
seed sown,
Resting the grass anod and upon,
To be leav'd and to be on.

Strong shapes and attributes of strong shapes, masculine trades,
sights, and sounds,
Long varied train of an emblem dials of music
Fingers of the organist skipping staccato over the keys of the
great organ.

Welcome are all earth's lands, each for its kind,
Welcome are lands of pine and oak,
Welcome are lands of the lemon and fig,
Welcome are lands of gold,
Welcome are lands of wheat and maize, welcome those of the
grape,
Welcome are lands of sugar and rice,
Welcome the cotton-lands, welcome those of the white potato
and sweet potato.
Welcome are mountains, flats, sands, forests, prairies,
Welcome the rich borders of rivers, table-lands, openings,
Welcome the measureless grazing-lands, welcome the teeming
soil of orchards, flax, honey, hemp:
Welcome just as much the other more hard-faced lands,
Lands rich as lands of gold or wheat and fruit lands,
Lands of mines, lands of the manly and rugged ores,
Lands of coal, copper, lead, tin, zinc,
Lands of iron—lands of the make of the axe.

The log at the wood-pile, the axe supported by it,
The sylvan hut, the vine over the doorway, the space clear'd
for a garden,
The irregular tapping of rain down on the leaves after the storm
is lull'd,
The wailing and moaning at intervals, the thought of the
sea,
The thought of ships struck in the storm and put on their
beam ends, and the cutting away of masts,
The sentiment of the huge timbers of old-fashion'd houses and
barns,
The remember'd print or narrative, the voyage at a venture of
men, families, goods,
The disembarkation, the founding of a new city,
The voyage of those who sought a New England and found it,
the outset anywhere,
The settlements of the Arkansas, Colorado, Ottawa, Willamette,
The slow progress, the scant fare, the axe, rifle, saddle-bags;
The beauty of all adventurous and daring persons,
The beauty of wood-boys, and wood-men with their clear
untrimm'd faces,
The beauty of independence, departure, actions that rely on
themselves,
The American contempt for statutes and ceremonies, the bound-
less impatience of restraint,
The loose drift of character, the inkling through random types,
the solidification;
The butcher in the slaughter-house, the hands aboard schooners
and sloops, the raftsman, the pioneer,
Lumbermen in their winter camp, daybreak in the woods,
stripes of snow on the limbs of trees, the occasional snapping,
The glad clear sound of one's own voice, the merry song, the
natural life of the woods, the strong day's work,
The blazing fire at night, the sweet taste of supper, the talk,
the bed of hemlock-boughs and the bear-skin;
The house-builder at work in cities or anywhere,
The preparatory jointing, squaring, sawing, mortising,
The hoist-up of beams, the push of them in their places, laying
them regular,
Setting the studs by their tenons in the mortises according as
they were prepared,

The blows of mallets and hammers, the attitudes of the men,
their curv'd limbs,
Bending, standing, astride the beams, driving in pins, holding
on by posts and braces,
The hook'd arm over the plate, the other arm wielding the
axe,
The floor-men forcing the planks close to be nail'd,
Their postures bringing their weapons downward on the bearers,
The echoes resounding through the vacant building;
The huge storehouse carried up in the city well under way,
The six framing-men, two in the middle and two at each end,
carefully bearing on their shoulders a heavy stick for a
cross-beam,
The crowded line of masons with trowels in their right hands
rapidly laying the long side wall, two hundred feet from
front to rear,
The flexible rise and fall of backs, the continual click of the
trowels striking the bricks,
The bricks one after another each laid so workmanlike in its
place, and set with a knock of the trowel-handle,
The piles of materials, the mortar on the mortar-boards, and
the steady replenishing by the hod men;
Spar-makers in the spar-yard, the swarming row of well-grown
apprentices,
The swing of their axes on the square-hew'd log shaping it
toward the shape of a mast,
The brisk short crackle of the steel driven slantingly into the
pine,
The butter-colour'd chips flying off in great flakes and slivers,
The limber motion of brawny young arms and hips in easy
costumes,
The constructor of wharves, bridges, piers, bulk-heads, floats,
stays against the sea;
The city fireman, the fire that suddenly bursts forth in the
close-pack'd square.
The arriving engines, the hoarse shouts, the nimble stepping
and daring,
The strong command through the fire-trumpets, the falling in
line, the rise and fall of the arms forcing the water,
The slender, spasmodic, blue-white jets, the bringing to bear of
the hooks and ladders and their execution,
The crash and cut-away of connecting wood-work, or through
floors if the fire smoulders under them,

The crowd with their lit faces watching, the glare and dense shadows;
 The forger at his forge-furnace and the user of iron after him,
 The maker of the axe large and small, and the welder and temperer,
 The chooser breathing his breath on the cold steel and trying
 the edge with his thumb,
 The one who clean shapes the handle and sets it firmly in the socket.
 The shadowy processions of the portraits of the past users also,
 The primal patient mechanics, the architects and engineers,
 The far-off Assyrian edifice and Mizia edifice,
 The Roman victors preceding the consuls,
 The antique European warrior with his axe in combat,
 The uplifted arm, the clatter of blows on the helmeted head,
 The death-howl, the limpsy tumbling body, the rush of friend
 and foe thither,
 The siege of revolted lieges determin'd for liberty,
 The summons to surrender, the battering at castle gates, the
 truce and parley,
 The sack of an old city in its time,
 The bursting in of mercenaries and bigots tumultuously and
 disorderly,
 Roar, flames, blood, drunkenness, madness,
 Goods freely rifled from houses and temples, screams of women
 in the gripe of brigands,
 Craft and thievery of camp-followers, men running, old persons
 despairing,
 The hell of war, the cruelties of creeds,
 The list of all executive deeds and words just or unjust,
 The power of personality just or unjust.

4

Muscle and pluck for ever!
 What invigorates life invigorates death,
 And the dead advance as much as the living advance,
 And the future is no more uncertain than the present,
 For the roughness of the earth and of man encloses as much as
 the delicatessen of the earth and of man,
 And nothing endures but personal qualities.

What do you think endures?
 Do you think a great city endures?

Or a teeming manufacturing state? or a prepared constitution?
 or the best built steamships?
 Or hotels of granite and iron? or any chef-d'œuvres of engineering,
 forts, armaments?

Away! these are not to be cherish'd for themselves.
 They fill their hour, the dancers dance, the musicians play for
 them,
 The show passes, all does well enough of course,
 All does very well till one flash of defiance.

A great city is that which has the greatest men and women,
 if it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in the whole
 world.

5

The place where a great city stands is not the place of stretch'd
 wharves, docks, manufactures, deposits of produce merely.
 Nor the place of ceaseless salutes of new comers or the anchor-
 lights of the departing,
 Nor the place of the tallest and costliest buildings or shops
 selling goods from the rest of the earth.
 Nor the place of the best libraries and schools, nor the place
 where money is plentiest,
 Nor the place of the most numerous population.

Where the city stands with the brawniest breed of orators and
 bards,

Where the city stands that is belov'd by these, and loves them
 in return and understands them.

Where no monuments exist to heroes but in the common words
 and deeds,

Where thrift is in its place, and prudence is in its place,

Where the men and women think lightly of the laws,

Where the slave ceases, and the master of slaves ceases,

Where the populace rise at once against the never-ending
 audacity of elected persons,

Where fierce men and women pour forth as the sea to the whistle
 of death pours its sweeping and unript waves,

Where outside authority enters always after the precedence of
 inside authority,

Where the citizen is always the head and ideal, and President,
 Mayor, Governor and what not, are agents for pay,

Where children are taught to be laws to themselves, and to
 depend on themselves,
 Where equanimity is illustrated in affairs,
 Where speculations on the soul are encouraged,
 Where women walk in public processions in the streets the same
 as the men,
 Where they enter the public assembly and take places the same
 as the men;
 Where the city of the faithfulest friends stands,
 Where the city of the cleanliness of the sexes stands,
 Where the city of the healthiest fathers stands,
 Where the city of the best-bodied mothers stands,
 There the great city stands.

6

How beggarly appear arguments before a defiant deed!
 How the floridness of the materials of cities shrivels before a
 man's or woman's look.

All waits or goes by default till a strong being appears;
 A strong being is the proof of the race and of the ability of the
 universe,
 When he or she appears materials are overaw'd,
 The dispute on the soul stops,
 The old customs and phrases are confronted, turn'd back, or
 laid away.

What is your money-making now? what can it do now?
 What is your respectability now?
 What are your theology, tuition, society, traditions, statute-
 books, now?
 Where are your jibes of being now?
 Where are your cavils about the soul now?

7

A sterile landscape covers the ore, there is as good as the best
 for all the forbidding appearance,
 There is the mine, there are the miners,
 The forge-furnace is there, the melt is accomplish'd, the ham-
 mersmen are at hand with their tongs and hammers,
 What always served and always serves is at hand.

Than this nothing has better served, it has served all,
 Served the fluent-tongued and subtle-sensed Greek, and long
 ere the Greek,
 Served in building the buildings that last longer than any,
 Served the Hebrew, the Persian, the most ancient Hindustanee,
 Served the mound-raiser on the Mississippi, served those whose
 relics remain in Central America,
 Served Albic temples in woods or on plains, with unhewn pillars
 and the druids,
 Served the artificial clefts, vast, high, silent, on the snow-
 cover'd hills of Scandinavia,
 Served those who tunc out of wind made on the granite walls
 rough sketches of the sun, moon, stars, ships, ocean
 waves,
 Served the paths of the irruptions of the Goths, served the
 pastoral tribes and nomads,
 Served the long distant Kelt, served the hardy pirates of the
 Baltic,
 Served before any of these the venerable and harmless men of
 Ethiopia,
 Served the making of helms for the galleys of pleasure and the
 making of those for war,
 Served all great works on land and all great works on the sea,
 For the mediæval ages and before the mediæval ages,
 Served not the living only then as now, but served the dead.

8

I see the European headsman,
 He stands mask'd, clothed in red, with huge legs and strong
 naked arms,
 And leans on a ponderous axe.

(Whom have you slaughter'd lately, European headsman?
 Whose is that blood upon you so wet and sticky?)

I see the clear sunsets of the martyrs,
 I see from the scaffolds the descending ghosts,
 Ghosts of dead lords, uncrown'd ladies, unpeach'd ministers,
 rejected kings,
 Rivals, traitors, poisoners, disgraced chieftains and the rest.

I see those who in any land have died for the good cause,

The seed is spare, nevertheless the crop shall never run out,
(Mind you, O foreign kings, O priests, the crop shall never run
out).

I see the blood wash'd entirely away from the axe,
Both blade and helve are clean,
They spirt no more the blood of European nobles, they clasp
no more the necks of queens.

I see the headsman withdraw and become useless,
I see the scaffold untrodden and mouldy. I see no longer any axe
upon it,
I see the mighty and friendly emblem of the power of my own
race, the fewest, largest race.

9

(America! I do not vaunt my love for you,
I have what I have.)

The axe leaps!
The solid forest gives fluid utterances,
They tumble forth, they rise and totem,
Hut, tent, landing, survey,
Flail, plough, pick, crowbar, spade,
Shingle, rail, prop, wainscot, jamb, lath, panel, gable,
Citadel, ceiling, saloon, academy, organ, exhibition-house,
library,
Cornice, trellis, pilaster, balcony, window, turret, porch,
Hoe, rake, pitchfork, pencil, wagon, staff, saw, jack-plane,
mallet, wedge, rounce,
Chair, tub, hoop, table, wicket, vane, sash, floor,
Work-box, chest, string'd instrument, boat, frame, and what not,
Capitol of States, and capitol of the nation of States,
Long stately rows in avenues, hospitals for orphans or for the
poor or sick,
Manhattan steamboats and clippers taking the measure of all
seas.

The shapes arise!
Shapes of the using of axes anyhow, and the users and all that
neighbours them,
Cutters down of wood and haulers of it to the Penobscot or
Kennebec,

Dwellers in cabins among the Californian mountains or by the
 little lakes, or on the Columbia,
 Dwellers south on the banks of the Gila or Rio Grande, fraterally
 gatherings, the characters and fun,
 Dwellers along the St. Lawrence, or north in Kanada, or down
 by the Yellowstone, dwellers on coasts and off coasts,
 Seal-fishers, whalers, arctic seamen breaking passages through
 the ice.

The shapes arise!

Shapes of factories, arsenals, foundries, markets,
 Shapes of the two-threaded tracks of railroads,
 Shapes of the sleepers of bridges, vast frameworks/girders, arches,
 Shapes of the fleets of barges, tows, lake and canal craft, river
 craft,
 Ship yards and dry-docks along the Eastern and Western seas,
 and in many a bay and by-place,
 The live-oak kelsons, the pine planks, the space, the hack-
 matak-roots for knees,
 The ships themselves on their ways, the tiers of scaffolds, the
 workmen busy outside and inside,
 The tools lying around, the great auger and little auger, the
 adze, bolt, line, square, gouge, and bead-plane.

12

The shapes arise!

The shape measur'd, saw'd, jack'd, join'd, stain'd,
 The coffin-shape for the dead to lie within in his shroud,
 The shape got out in posts, in the bedstead posts, in the posts
 of the bride's bed,
 The shape of the little trough, the shape of the rockers beneath,
 the shape of the babe's cradle,
 The shape of the floor-planks, the floor-planks for dancers'
 feet,
 The shape of the planks of the family home, the home of the
 friendly parents and children,
 The shape of the roof of the home of the happy young man and
 woman, the roof over the well-married young man and
 woman,
 The roof over the supper joyously cook'd by the chaste wife,
 and joyously eaten by the chaste husband, content after
 his day's work.

The shapes arise!

The shape of the prisoner's place in the court-room, and of him
or her seated in the place,

The shape of the liquor-bar lean'd against by the young rum-
drinker and the old rum-drinker,

The shape of the shamed and angry stairs trod by sneaking
footsteps,

The shape of the sly settee, and the adulterous unwholesome
couple,

The shape of the gambling-board with its devilish winnings and
losings,

The shape of the step-ladder for the convicted and sentenced
murderer, the murderer with haggard face and pinion'd
arms,

The sheriff at hand with his deputies, the silent and white-lipp'd
crowd, the dangling of the rope.

The shapes arise!

Shapes of doors giving many exits and entrances,

The door passing the dis sever'd friend flush'd and in haste,

The door that admits good news and bad news,

The door whence the son left home confident and puff'd up,

The door he enter'd again from a long and scandalous absence,
diseas'd, broken down, without innocence, without means.

11

Her shape arises,

She less guarded than ever, yet more guarded than ever,

The gross and soil'd she moves among do not make her gross
and soil'd,

She knows the thoughts as she passes, nothing is conceal'd from
her,

She is none the less considerate or friendly therefor,

She is the best lov'd, it is without exception, she has no reason
to fear and she does not fear,

Oaths, quarrels, hiccupp'd songs, smutty expressions, are idle
to her as she passes,

She is silent, she is possess'd of herself, they do not offend her,
She receives them as the laws of Nature receive them, she is
strong,

She too is a law of Nature—there is no law stronger than
she is.

The main shapes arise!
Shapes of Democracy total, result of centuries,
Shapes ever projecting other shapes,
Shapes of turbulent manly cities,
Shapes of the friends and home-givers of the whole earth,
Shapes bracing the earth and braced with the whole earth

SONG OF THE EXPOSITION

1

(Ah, little reck's the labourer,
How near his work is holding him to God,
The loving labourer through space and time.)

After all not to create only, or found only,
But to bring perhaps from afar what is already founded,
To give it our own identity, average, limitless, free,
To fill the gross the torpid bulk with vital religious fire,
Not to repel or destroy so much as accept, fuse, rehabilitate,
To obey as well as command, to follow more than to lead,
These also are the lessons of our New World;
While how little the New after all, how much the Old, Old
World!

Long and long has the grass been growing,
Long and long has the rain been falling,
Long has the globe been rolling round.

Come Muse migrate from Greece and Ionia,
Cross out please those immensely overpaid accounts,
That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Aeneas', Odysseus'
wanderings,
Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy
Parnassus,
Repeat at Jerusalem, place the notice high on Jaffa's gate and
on Mount Moriah,
The same on the walls of your German, French, and Spanish
castles, and Italian collections,
For know a better, fresher, busier sphere, a wide, untried domain
awaits, demands you.

3

Responsive to our summons,
Or rather to her long-nurs'd inclination,

Join'd with an irresistible, natural gravitation,
 She comes! I hear the rustling of her gown,
 I scent the odour of her breath's delicious fragrance,
 I mark her step divine, her curious eyes a turning, toiling,
 Upon this very scene

The dame of dames! can I believe then,
 Those ancient temples, sculptures classic, could none of them
 retain her?

Nor shades of Virgil and Dante, nor myriad memories, poems,
 old associations, narrative and bold on to be?
 But that she's left them all - and here?

Yes, if you will allow me to say so,

I, my friends, if you do not, can plainly see her,

The same undying soul of earth's, activity's, beauty's, heroism's
 expression,

Out from her evolutions hither come, ended the strata of her
 former themes,

Hidden and cover'd by to-day's, foundation of to day's,

Ended, deceas'd through time, her voice by Carlyle's fountain
 Silent the broken-lipp'd Sphinx in Egypt, silent all those cen-
 tury-baffling tombs,

Ended for aye the epics of Asia's, Europe's helmeted warriors
 ended the primitive call of the muses,

Calliope's call for ever closed, Clio, Melpomene, Thalia dead.

Ended the stately rhythmic of Una and Oriana, ended the quest
 of the holy Grail.

Jerusalem a handful of ashes blown by the wind, extinct,

The Crusaders' streams of shadowy midnight troops sped with
 the sunrise,

Amadis, Tancred, utterly gone, Charlemagne, Roland, Oliver
 gone,

Palmerin, ogre, departed, vanish'd the turrets that Usk from
 its waters reflected.

Arthur vanish'd with all his knights, Merlin and Lancelot and
 Galahad, all gone, dissolv'd utterly like an exhalation;

Pass'd! pass'd! for us, for ever pass'd, that once so mighty
 world, now void, inanimate, phantom world,

Embroider'd, dazzling, foreign world, with all its gorgeous
 legends, myths,

Its kings and castles proud, its priests and warlike lords and
 courtly dames,

Pass'd to its charnel vault, coffin'd with crown and armour on,
 Blazon'd with Shakespeare's purple page,
 And dirged by Tennyson's sweet sad rhyme.

I say I see, my friends, if you do not, the illustrious emigré
 - (having it is true in her day, although the same, changed,
 journey'd considerable),
 Making directly for this rendezvous, vigorously clearing a path
 for herself, striding through the confusion,
 By thud of machinery and shrill steam-whistle undismay'd,
 Bluff'd not a bit by drain-pipe, gasometers, artificial fertilisers,
 Smiling and pleas'd with palpable intent to stay,
 She's here, install'd amid the kitchen ware!

4

But hold—don't I forget my manners?
 To introduce the stranger (what else indeed do I live to chant
 for?) to thee (dumbly;
 In liberty's name welcome immortal! clasp hands,
 And ever henceforth sisters dear be both.

Fear not, O Muse! truly new ways and days receive, surround
 you,
 I candidly confess a queer, queer race, of novel fashion,
 And yet the same old human race, the same within, without,
 Faces and hearts the same, feelings the same, yearnings the
 same,
 The same old love, beauty and use the same.

5

We do not blame thee, elder World, nor really separate ourselves
 from thee,
 (Would the son separate himself from the father?)
 Looking back on thee, seeing thee to thy duties, grandeurs,
 through past ages bending, building,
 We build to ours to-day.

Mightier than Egypt's tombs,
 Fairer than Grecia's, Roma's temples,
 Prouder than Milan's statued, spired cathedral,
 More picturesque than Rhenish castle-keeps,
 We plan even now to raise, beyond them all,

Thy great cathedral sacred industry, no tomb,
A keep for life for practical invention.

As in a waking vision,
E'en while I chant I see it rise, I scan and prophesy outside
and in,
Its manifold ensemble.

Around the palace, loftier, fairer, ampler than any yet,
Earth's modern wonder, history's seven outstripping,
High rising tier on tier with glass and iron façades,
Gladdening the sun and sky, enlured in cheerfullest hues,
Bronze, lilac, robin's-egg, marine, and crimson,
Over whose golden roof shall flaunt, beneath thy banner Freedom,
The banners of the States and flags of every land,
A brood of lofty, fair, but lesser palaces shall cluster.

Somewhere within their walls shall all that forwards perfect
human life be started,
Tried, taught, advanced, visibly exhibited.

Not only all the world of works, trade, products,
But all the workmen of the world here to be represented.

Here shall you trace in flowing operation,
In every state of practical, busy movement, the rills of civilisation,
Materials here under your eye shall change their shape as if by
magic,
The cotton shall be pick'd almost in the very field,
Shall be dried, clean'd, ginn'd, baled, spun into thread and cloth
before you,
You shall see hands at work at all the old processes and all the
new ones,
You shall see the various grains and how flour is made and then
bread baked by the bakers,
You shall see the crude ores of California and Nevada passing on
and on till they become bullion,
You shall watch how the printer sets type, and learn what a
composing-stick is,
You shall mark in amazement the Hoe press whirling its cylinder,
shedding the printed leaves steady and fast,
The photograph, model, watch, pin, nail, shall be created before
you.

In large calm halls, a stately museum shall teach you the infinite
 lessons of minerals,
 In another, woods, plants, vegetation shall be illustrated-- in
 another, animals, animal life and development.

One stately house shall be the music house,
 Others for other arts-- learning, the sciences, shall all be here,
 None shall be slighted, none but shall here be honour'd, help'd,
 exempl'd.

6

(This, this ~~and~~ these, America, shall be *your* pyramids and
 obelisks,
 Your Alexandrian Pharos, gardens of Babylon,
 Your temple at Olympia.)

The male and female many labouring not
 Shall ever here confront the labouring many,
 With precious benefits to both, glory to all,
 To thee America, and thee eternal Muse.

And here shall ye inhabit powerful matrons!
 In your vast state vaster than all the old.
 Echoed through long long centuries to come,
 To sound of different, prouder songs, with stronger themes,
 Practical, peaceful life the people's life, the People themselves,
 Lifted, illumin'd, bathed in peace - elate, secure in peace.

Away with themes of war! away with war itself!
 Hence from my shudd'ring sight to never more return that show
 of blacken'd, mutilated corpses!
 That hell unpent and raid of blood, fit for wild tigers or for lop-
 toagu'd wolves, not reasoning men,
 And in its stead speed industry's campaign,
 With thy undaunted armies, engineering,
 Thy pennants labour, loosen'd to the breeze,
 Thy bugles sounding loud and clear.

Away with old romance!
 Away with novels, plots and plays of foreign courts,
 Away with love-verses sugar'd in rhyme, the intrigues, amours
 of idlers,

Fitted for only banquets of the night where dancers to late
music slide,

The unhealthy pleasures, extravagant dissipations of the day.
With perfumes, heat and wine, beneath the dazzling chandeliers.

To you, ye reverent sane sisters,
I raise a voice for far superlative themes for poets and for art,
To exalt the present and the real,
To teach the average man the glory of his daily walk and trade,
To sing in songs how exercise and chemical life are never to be
baffled,

To manual work for each and all, to plough, hoe, dig,
To plant and tend the tree, the berry, vegetable, flowers,
For every man to see to it that he really do something, for every
woman too;

To use the hammer and the saw (rip, or cross-cut),
To cultivate a turn for carpentering, plastering, painting,
To work as tailor, tailoress, nurse, hostler, porter,
To invent a little, something ingenious, to add the washing, cook-
ing, cleaning,

And hold it no disgrace to take a hand at them themselves.

I say I bring thee Muse to day and here,

All occupations, duties broad and close.

Toil, healthy toil and sweat, endless, without cessation,

The old, old practical burdens, interests, joys,

The family, parentage, childhood, husband and wife,

The house-comforts, the house itself and all its belongings,

Food and its preservation, chemistry applied to it,

Whatever forms the average, strong complete, sweet-blooded
man or woman, the perfect longeve personality,

And helps its present life to health and happiness, and shapes its
soul,

For the eternal real life to come.

With latest connections, works, the inter-transportation of the
world,

Steam-power, the great express lines, gas, petroleum,

These triumphs of our time, the Atlantic's delicate cable,

The Pacific railroad, the Suez Canal, the Mont Cenis and Gothard
and Hoosac tunnels, the Brooklyn Bridge,

This earth all spann'd with iron rails, with lines of steamships
threading every sea,

Our own rondure, the current globe I bring.

And thou America,
Thy offspring towering e'er so high, yet higher Thee above all
towering,
With Victory on thy left, and at thy right hand Law;
Thou Union holding all, fusing, absorbing, tolerating all,
Thee, ever thee, I sing.

Thou, also thou, a World,
With all thy wide geographies, manifold, different, distant,
Rounded by thee in one - one common orbic language,
One common indivisible destiny for All.

And by the spells which ye vouchsafe to those your ministers in
earnest,
I here personify and call my themes, to make them pass before ye.

Behold, America! (and thou, ineffable guest and sister!)
For thee come trooping up thy waters and thy lands;
Behold! thy fields and farms, thy far-off woods and mountains,
As in procession coming.

Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships;
See, where their white sails, bellying in the wind, speckle the
green and blue,
See, the steamers coming and going, steaming in or out of port,
See, dusky and undulating, the long pennants of smoke.

Behold, in Oregon, far in the north and west,
Or in Maine, far in the north and east, thy cheerful axemen,
Wielding all day their axes.

Behold, on the lakes, thy pilots at their wheels, thy oarsmen,
How the ash writhes under those muscular arms!

There by the furnace, and there by the anvil,
Behold thy sturdy blacksmiths swinging their sledges,
Overhand so steady, overhand they turn and fall with joyous
clank,
Like a tumult of laughter.

Mark the spirit of invention everywhere, thy rapid patents.
 Thy continual workshops, foundries, risen or rising,
 See, from their chimneys low the tall flame-fires stream.

Mark, thy interminable farms, North, South,
 Thy wealthy daughter-states, Eastern and Western,
 The varied products of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Georgia,
 Texas, and the rest,
 Thy limitless crops, grass, wheat, sugar, oil, corn, rice, hemp, hops,
 Thy barns all fill'd, the endless freight-train and the bulging
 storehouse,
 The grapes that ripen on thy vines, the apples in thy orchards,
 Thy incalculable lumber, beef, pork, potatoes, thy coal, thy gold
 and silver,
 The inexhaustible iron in thy mines.

All thine, O sacred Union!
 Ships, farms, shops, barns, factories, mines,
 City and State, North, South, item and aggregate,
 We dedicate, dread Mother, all to thee!

Protectress absolute, thou! bulwark of all!
 For well we know that while thou givest each and all (generous
 as God),
 Without thee neither all nor each, nor land, home,
 Nor ship, nor mine, nor any here this day secure,
 Nor aught, nor any day secure

And thou, the Emblem waving over all!
 Delicate beauty, a word to thee (it may be salutary),
 Remember thou hast not always been as here to day so com-
 fortably ensovereign'd,
 In other scenes than these have I observ'd thee flag,
 Not quite so trim and whole and freshly blooming in folds of
 stainless silk,
 But I have seen thee bunting, to tatters torn upon thy splinter'd
 staff,
 Or clutch'd to some young colour-bearer's breast with desperate
 hands,
 Savagely struggled for, for life or death, fought over long,
 'Mid cannons' thunder-crash and many a curse and groan and
 yell, and rifle-volleys cracking sharp,

And moving masses as wild demons surging, and lives as
 nothing risk'd,
 For thy mere remnant grined with dirt and smoke and sopp'd
 in blood,
 For sake of that, my beauty, and that thou might'st dally as now
 secure up there.
 Many a good man have I seen go under.

Now here and these and hence in peace, all thine, O Flag!
 And here and hence for thee, O universal Muse! and thou for
 them!
 And here and hence, O Union, all the work and workmen thine!
 None separate from thee - henceforth One only, we and thou
 For the blood of the children, what is it, only the blood
 maternal?
 And lives and works, what are they all at best, except the roads
 to faith and death).

While we rehearse our measureless wealth, it is for thee, dear
 Mother,
 We own it all and several to day indissoluble in thee;
 Think not our chant, our show, merely for products gross or lucre
 --it is for thee, the soul in thee, electric, spiritual!
 Our farms, inventions, crops, we own in thee! cities and States in
 thee!
 Our freedom all in thee! our very lives in thee!

SONG OF THE REDWOOD-TREE

I

A CALIFORNIA song,
A prophecy and indirection, a thought impalpable to're the air,
A chorus of dryads, fading, departing, or hundredryads departing,
A murmuring fateful, giant voice, out of the earth and sky,
Voice of a mighty dying tree in the redwood forest dense.

*Farewell my brethren,
Farewell O earth and sky, farewell ye neighbouring waters,
My time has ended, my term has come*

Along the northern coast,
Just back from the rock-bound shore and the caves,
In the salme air from the sea in the Mendocino country,
With the surge for base and accompaniment low and hoarse,
With crackling blows of axes sounding musically driven by
strong arms,
Riven deep by the sharp tongues of the axes, there in the red-
wood forest dense,
I heard the mighty tree its death-chant chanting.

The choppers heard not, the camp shanties echoed not,
The quick-ear'd teamsters and chain and jack saw men heard
not,
As the wood-spirits came from their haunts of a thousand years
to join the refrain
But in my soul I plainly heard.

Murmuring out of its myriad leaves,
Down from its lofty top rising two hundred feet high,
Out of its stalwart trunk and limbs, out of its foot thick bark,
That chant of the seasons and tune, chant not of the past only
but the future.

*You untold life of me,
And all you venerable and innocent joys,*

*Perennial hardy life of me with joys 'mid rain and many a
summer sun,*

And the white snows and night and the wild winds ;

*O the great patient rugged joys, my soul's strong joys unreck'd by
man*

*(For know I bear the soul befitting me, I too have consciousness,
identity,*

And all the rocks and mountains have, and all the earth),

Joys of the life befitting me and brothers mine,

Our time, our turn has come.

Nor yield we mournfully majestic brothers.

We who have grandly fill'd our time :

With Nature's calm content, with tacit huge delight,

We welcome what we wrought for through the past,

And leave the field for them.

For them predestined long,

For a superlative race, they too to grandly fill their time,

For them we abdicate, in them ourselves ye forest kings !

*In them these skies and airs, these mountain peaks, Shasta,
Nevadas,*

*These huge precipitous cliffs, this amplitude, these valleys, far
Yosemite,*

To be in them absorb'd, assimilated

'Then to a loftier strain,

Still prouder, more ecstatic rose the chant,

As if the heins, the deities of the West,

Joining with master-tongue bore part.

Not won from Asia's fetiches,

Nor red from Europe's old dynastic slaughter house

*(Area of murder-plots of thrones, with scent left yet of wars and
scaffolds everywhere),*

*But come from Nature's long and harmless throes, peacefully
build'd thence,*

These virgin lands, lands of the Western shore,

To the new culminating man, to you, the empire new,

You promis'd long, we pledge, we dedicate.

You occult deep volitions,

*You average spiritual manhood, purpose of all, pois'd on yourself,
giving not taking law,*

*You womanhood divine, mistress and source of all, whose life
 and love and aught that comes from life and love,
 You unseen moral essence of all the vast materials of
 (age upon age working in death the same as life),
 You that, sometimes known, oftener unknown, really shape and
 mould the New World, adjusting it to Time and Space,
 You hidden national will lying in your abysses, conceal'd but ever
 alert,
 You past and present purposes tenaciously pursued, maybe un-
 conscious of yourselves,
 Unseen'd by all the passing errors, perturbations of the surface:
 You vital, universal, deathless germs, beneath all creeds, arts,
 statutes, literatures,
 Here build your homes for good, establish here, these ureas entire,
 lands of the Western shore,
 We pledge, we dedicate to you.*

*For man of you, your characteristic race,
 Here may he hardy, sweet, gigantic grow, here tower proportionate
 to Nature,
 Here climb the vast pure spaces unconfined, uncheck'd by wall or
 roof,
 Here laugh with storm or sun, here joy, here patiently mature,
 Here heed himself, unfold himself (not others' formulas heed),
 here fill his time,
 To duly fall, to aid, unreck'd at last,
 To disappear, to serve.*

Thus on the northern coast,
 In the echo of teamsters' calls and the clinking chains, and the
 music of choppers' axes,
 The falling trunk and limbs, the crash, the muffled shriek, the
 groan,
 Such words combined from the redwood-tree, as of voices
 ecstatic, ancient and rustling,
 The century-lasting, unseen dryads, singing, withdrawing,
 All their recesses of forests and mountains leaving,
 From the Cascade range to the Wahsatch, or Idaho far, or
 Utah,
 To the deities of the modern henceforth yielding,
 The chorus and indications, the vistas of coming humanity, the
 settlements, features all,
 In the Mendocino woods I caught.

The flashing and golden pageant of California,
 The sudden and gorgeous drama, the sunny and ample lands,
 The long and varied stretch from Puget Sound to Colorado south,
 Lands bathed in sweeter, rarer, healthier air, valleys and mountain
 cliffs,
 The fields of Nature long prepared and fallow, the silent, cyclic
 chemistry,
 The slow and steady ages plodding, the unoccupied surface ripening,
 the rich ores forming beneath.
 At last the New arriving, assuming, taking possession,
 A swarming and busy race settling and engendering everywhere,
 Ships coming in from the whole round world, and going out to
 the whole world,
 To India and China and Australia and the thousand island
 paradises of the Pacific,
 Populous cities, the latest inventions, the steamers on the rivers,
 the railroads, with many a thrifty farm, with machinery.
 An iron and wheat and the grape, and diggings of yellow gold.

But more in you than the old lands of the Western shore,
 (These but the means, the implements, the standing-ground)
 I see in you, certain to come, the promise of thousands of years,
 till now deferred
 Promis'd to be fulfill'd, our common kind, the race.

The new society at last, proportionate to Nature,
 In man of you, more than your mountain peaks or stalwart trees
 imperial,
 In woman more, far more, than all your gold or vines, or even
 vital air

Fresh come, to a new world indeed, yet long prepared,
 I see the genius of the modern, child of the real and ideal,
 Clearing the ground for broad humanity, the true America, heir
 of the past so grand,
 To build a grander future.

A SONG FOR OCCUPATIONS

I

A song for occupations!

In the labour of engines and trades and the labour of fields I find
the developments,
And find the eternal meanings.

Workmen and Workwomen!

Were all educations practical and ornamental well display'd out
of me, what would it amount to?

Were I as the head teacher, charitable proprietor, wise school-
man, what would it amount to?

Were I to you as the boss employing and paying you, would that
satisfy you?

The learn'd virtuous, benevolent, and the usual terms,
A man like me and never the usual terms.

Neither a servant nor a master I.

I take no sooner a large price than a small price, I will have my
own whoever enjoys me,

I will be even with you and you shall be even with me.

If you stand at work in a shop, I stand as high as the highest in
the same shop,

If you bestow gifts on your brother or dearest friend I demand as
good as your brother or dearest friend,

If your lover, husband, wife, is welcome by day or night, I must
be personally as welcome,

If you become degraded, criminal, ill, then I become so for your
sake,

If you remember your foolish and outlaw'd deeds, do you think
I cannot remember my own foolish and outlaw'd deeds?

If you carouse at the table I carouse at the opposite side of the
table,

If you meet some stranger in the streets and love him or her, why
I often meet strangers in the street and love them.

Why what have you thought of yourself?
 Is it you then that thought yourself less?
 Is it you that thought the President greater than you?
 Or the rich better off than you? or the educated wiser than you?

(Because you are greasy or pimples, or were once drunk, or a thief,
 Or that you are diseas'd, or rheumatic, or a prostitute,
 Or from frivolity or impotence, or that you are no scholar and
 never saw your name in print.
 Do you give in that you are any less immortal?)

2

Souls of men and women! it is not you I call unseen, unheard,
 untouchable and untouched.
 It is not you I go argue pro and con about, and to settle whether
 you are alive or no,
 I own publicly who you are, if nobody else owns.

Grown, half-grown and babe, of this country and every country,
 indoors and outdoors, one just as much as the other, I see,
 And all else behind or through them.

The wife, and she is not one jot less than the husband,
 The daughter, and she is just as good as the son,
 The mother, and she is every bit as much as the father.

Offspring of ignorant and poor, boys apprenticed to trades,
 Young fellows working on farms and old fellows working on
 farms,
 Sailor-men, merchant-men, coasters, immigrants,
 All these I see, but nigher and farther the same I see,
 None shall escape me and none shall wish to escape me.

I bring what you much need yet always have,
 Not money, amours, dress, eating, erudition, but as good,
 I send no agent or medium, offer no representative of value, but
 offer the value itself.

There is something that comes to one now and perpetually,
 It is not what is printed, preach'd, discussed, it eludes discussion
 and print,

It is not to be put in a book, it is not in this book,
It is for you whoever you are, it is no farther from you than your
hearing and sight are from you,
It is hinted by nearest, commonest, readiest, it is ever provoked
by them.

You may read in many languages, yet read nothing about it.
You may read the President's message and read nothing about
it there,
Nothing in the reports from the State department, or Treasury
department, or in the daily papers or weekly papers.
Or in the census or revenue returns, prices current, or any
accounts of stock.

3

The sun and stars that float in the open air,
The apple-shaped earth and we upon it, surely the drift of them
is something grand,
I do not know what it is except that it is grand, and that it is
happiness,
And that the enclosing purport of us here is not a speculation or
hon mot or reconnaissance,
And that it is not something which by luck may turn out well for
us, and without luck must be a failure for us,
And not, something which may yet be retracted in a certain
contingency.

The light and shade, the curious sense of body and identity, the
greed that with perfect complaisance devours all things,
The endless pride and outstretching of man, unspeakable joys
and sorrows,
The wonder every one sees in every one else he sees, and the
wonders that fill each minute of time for ever,
What have you reckon'd them for, camarado?
Have you reckon'd them for your trade or farm-work? or for
the profits of your store?
Or to achieve yourself a position? or to fill a gentleman's leisure,
or a lady's leisure?

Have you reckon'd that the landscape took substance and form
that it might be painted in a picture?
Or men and women that they might be written of, and songs
sung?

Or the attraction of gravity, and the great laws and harmonious combinations and the fluids of the air, as subjects for the savans?

Or the brown land and the blue sea for maps and charts?

Or the stars to be put in constellations and named fancy names?

Or that the growth of seeds is for agricultural tables, or agriculture itself?

Old institutions, these arts, libraries, legends, collections, and the practice handed along in manufactures, will we rate them so high?

Will we rate our cash and business high? I have no objection, I rate them as high as the highest—then a child born of a woman and man I rate beyond all rate.

We thought our Union grand, and our Constitution grand,

I do not say they are not grand and good, for they are,

I am this day just as much in love with them as you,

Then I am in love with You, and with all my fellows upon the earth.

We consider bibles and religions divine: I do not say they are not divine,

I saw they have all grown out of you, and may grow out of you still.

It is not they who give the life, it is you who give the life,

Leaves are not more shed from the trees, or trees from the earth, than they are shed out of you.

4

The sum of all known reverence I add up in you whoever you are, The President is there in the White House for you, it is not you who are here for him.

The Secretaries act in their bureaus for you, not you here for them,

The Congress convenes every Twelfth-month for you,

Laws, courts, the forming of States, the charters of cities, the going and coming of commerce and mails, are all for you.

List close my scholars dear,

Doctrines, politics and civilisation exurge from you,

Sculpture and monuments and anything inscribed anywhere are tallied in you,

The gist of histories and statistics as far back as the records reach
is in you this hour, and myths and tales the same,
If you were not breathing and walking here, where would you
all be?

The most renown'd poems would be ashes, orations and plays
would be vacuums.

All architecture is what you do to it when you look upon it
(Did you think it was in the white or grey stone? or the lines of
the arches and cornices?)

All music is what awakes from you when you are reminded by the
instruments,

It is not the violins and the cornets, it is not the oboe nor the
beating drum, nor the score of the baritone singer singing
his sweet romanza, nor that of the men's chorus, nor that
of the women's chorus,

It is nearer and farther than they.

5

Will the whole come back then?

Can each see signs of the last by a look in the looking glass? is
there nothing greater or more?

Does all sit there with you, with the mystic unseen soul?

Strange and hard that paradox true I give,
Objects gross and the unseen soul are one.

House-building, measuring, sawing the boards,
Blacksmithing, glass blowing, nail making, coopering tin-roof-
ing, shingle-dressing,

Ship-joining, dock-building, fish curing, flagging of sidewalks by
flaggers,

The pump, the pile driver, the great derrick, the coal kiln and
brick-kiln--

Coal-mines and all that is down there, the lamps in the darkness,
echoes, songs, what meditations, what vast native thoughts
looking through snutch'd faces,

Iron-works, forge-fires in the mountains or by river-banks, men
around feeling the melt with huge crowbars, lumps of ore,
the due combining of ore, limestone, coal,

The blast-furnace and the puddling-furnace, the loup-lump at the
bottom of the melt at last, the rolling-mill, the stumpy
bars of pig-iron, the strong clean-shaped T-rail for railroads,

Oil-works, silk-works, white-lead-works, the sugar-house, steam-saws, the great mills and factories,
 Stone-cutting, shapely trimmings for façades of window or door-lintels, the mallet, the tooth-chisel, the jib to protect the thumb,
 The calking-iron, the kettle of boiling vault-cement, and the fire under the kettle,
 The cotton-bale, the stevedore's hook, the saw and buck of the sawyer, the mould of the moulder, the working knife of the butcher, the ice-saw, and all the work with ice,
 The work and tools of the rigger, grappeler, sail maker, block-maker,
 Goods of gutta percha, papier-maché, colours, brushes, brush-making, glazier's implements,
 The veneer and glue pot, the confectioner's ornaments, the decanter and glasses, the shears and flat-iron,
 The awl and knee-strap, the pint measure and quart measure, the counter and scale, the writing-pen of quill or metal, the making of all sorts of edged tools,
 The brewery, brewing, the malt, the vats, everything that is done by brewers, wine-makers, vinegar-makers,
 Leather-dressing, coach-making, boot-making, rope-twisting, distilling, sign-painting, lime-burning, cotton-picking, electroplating, electrotyping, stereotyping,
 Stave-machines, planing-machines, reaping machines, ploughing-machines, thrashing-machines, steam wagons,
 The cart of the carman, the omnibus, the ponderous dray,
 Pyrotechny, letting off colour'd fireworks at night, fancy figures and jets;
 Beef on the butcher's stall, the slaughter house of the butcher, the butcher in his killing-clothes,
 The pens of live pork, the killing-hammer, the hog-hook, the scalding tub, gutting, the cutter's cleaver, the packer's maul, and the plenteous winter-work of pork packing,
 Flour-works, grinding of wheat, rye, maize, rice, the barrels and the half and quarter barrels, the loaded barges, the high piles on wharves and levees,
 The men and the work of the men on ferries, railroads, coasters, fish-boats, canals;
 The hourly routine of your own or any man's life, the shop, yard, store, or factory,
 These shows all near you by day and night—workman! whoever you are, your daily life!

In that and them the heft of the heaviest—in that and them far
 more than you estimated (and far less also),
 In them realities for you and me, in them poems for you and me,
 In them, not yourself—you and your soul entlose all things,
 regardless of estimation,
 In them the development good—in them all themes, hints,
 possibilities.

I do not affirm that what you see beyond is futile, I do not advise
 you to stop,
 I do not say leadings you thought great are not great,
 But I say that none lead to greater than these lead to.

6

Will you seek afar off? you surely come back at last,
 In things best known to you finding the best, or as good as the
 best,
 In folks nearest to you finding the sweetest, strongest, lovingest,
 Happiness, knowledge, not in another place but this place, not for
 another hour but this hour,
 Man in the first you see or touch, always in friend, brother,
 rightest neighbour—woman in mother, sister, wife,
 The popular tastes and employments taking precedence in poems
 or anywhere,
 You workwomen and workmen of these States having your own
 divine and strong life,
 And all else giving place to men and women like you.

When the psalm sings instead of the singer,
 When the script preaches instead of the preacher,
 When the pulpit descends and goes instead of the carver that
 carved the supporting desk,
 When I can touch the body of books by night or by day, and
 when they touch my body back again,
 When a university course convinces like a slumbering woman and
 child convince,
 When the minted gold in the vault smiles like the night-watch-
 man's daughter,
 When warrantee deeds loafe in chairs opposite and are my friendly
 companions,
 I intend to reach them my hand, and make as much of them as
 I do of men and women like you.

A SONG OF THE ROLLING EARTH

I

A song of the rolling earth, and of words according,
Were you thinking that those were the words, those upright lines &
those curves, angles, dots?
No, those are not the words, the substantial words are in the
ground and sea,
They are in the air, they are in you.

Were you thinking that those were the words, those delicious
sounds out of your friends' mouths?
No, the real words are more delicious than they.

Human bodies are words, myriads of words.
(In the best poems reappears the body, man's or woman's, well-
shaped, natural, gay,
Every part able, active, receptive, without shame or the need of
shame).

Air, soil, water, fire—those are words,
I myself am a word with them—my qualities interpenetrate with
theirs—my name is nothing to them,
Though it were told in the three thousand languages, what would
air, soil, water, fire, know of my name?

A healthy presence, a friendly or commanding gesture, are words,
sayings, meanings,
The charms that go with the mere looks of some men and women,
are sayings and meanings also.

The workmanship of souls is by those inaudible words of the
earth,
The masters know the earth's words and use them more than
audible words.

Amelioration is one of the earth's words,
The earth neither lags nor hastens,

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It has all attributes, growths, effects, latent in itself from the
jump,
It is not half beautiful only, defects and excrescences show, not
as much as perfections show.

The earth does not withhold, it is generous enough
The truths of the earth continually wait, they are not so concealing
either.

They are calm, subtle, untransmissible by print,
They are imbued through all things conveying themselves
willingly,

Conveying a sentiment and invitation, I utter and utter,
I speak not, yet if you hear me not of what avail am I to you?
To hear, to better, lacking these of what avail am I?

(Accouché! accouché!
Will you rot your own fruit in yourself there?
Will you squat and stifle there?)

The earth does not argue,
Is not pathetic, has no arrangements,
Does not scream, haste, persuade, threaten, promise,
Makes no discriminations, has no conceivable failures,
Closes nothing, refuses nothing, shuts none out,
Of all the powers, objects, states, it notifies, shuts none out

The earth does not exhibit itself nor refuse to exhibit itself,
possesses still underneath,
Underneath the ostensible sounds, the august chorus of heroes,
the wail of slaves,
Persuasions of lovers, curses, gasps of the dying, laughter of
young people, accents of bargainers,
Underneath these possessing words that never fail.

To her children the words of the eloquent dumb great mother
never fail,
The true words do not fail, for motion does not fail and reflection
does not fail,
Also the day and night do not fail, and the voyage we pursue
does not fail.

Of the interminable sisters,
Of the ceaseless cotillions of sisters,

Of the centripetal and centrifugal sisters, the elder and younger
sisters,
The beautiful sister we know dances on with the rest.

With her ample back towards every beholder,
With the fascinations of youth and the equal fascinations of
age,
Sits she whom I too love like the rest, sits undisturb'd,
Holding up in her hand what has the character of a mirror, while
her eyes glance back from it,
Glance as she sits, inviting none, denying none,,
Holding a mirror day and night tirelessly before her own face.

Seen at hand or seen at a distance,
Duly the twenty-four appear in public every day,
Duly approach and pass with their companions or a companion,
Looking from no countenances of their own, but from the
countenances of those who are with them,
From the countenances of children or women or the manly
countenance,
From the open countenances of animals or from inanimate
things,
From the landscape or waters or from the exquisite apparition of
the sky,
From our countenances, mine and yours, faithfully returning
them,
Every day in public appearing without fail, but never twice with
the same companions.

Embracing man, embracing all, proceed the three hundred and
sixty-five resistlessly round the sun;
Embracing all, soothing supporting, follow close three hundred
and sixty-five offsets of the first, sure and necessary as they.

Tumbling on steadily, nothing dreading,
Sunshine, storm, cold, heat, for ever withstanding, passing,
carrying,
The soul's realisation and determination still inheriting,
The fluid vacuum around and ahead still entering and dividing,
No balk retarding, no anchor anchoring, on no rock striking,
Swift, glad, content, unbereav'd, nothing losing,
Of all able and ready at any time to give strict account,
The divine ship sails the divine sea.

2

Whoever you are! motion and reflection are especially for you
The divine ship sails the divine sea for you.

Whoever you are! you are he or she for whom the earth is solid
and liquid,
You are he or she for whom the sun and moon hang in the sky,
For none more than you are the present and the past,
For none more than you is immortality.

Each man to himself and each woman to herself, is the word of
the past and present, and the true word of immortality;
No one can acquire for another—not one,
Not one can grow for another—not one

The song is to the singer, and comes back most to him,
The teaching is to the teacher, and comes back most to him,
The murder is to the murderer, and comes back most to him,
The theft is to the thief, and comes back most to him,
The love is to the lover, and comes back most to him,
The gift is to the giver, and comes back most to him - it cannot
fail.

The oration is to the orator, the acting is to the actor and actress
not to the audience,
And no man understands any greatness or goodness but his own,
or the indication of his own

3

I swear the earth shall surely be complete to him or her who
shall be complete,
The earth remains jagged and broken only to him or her who
remains jagged and broken.

I swear there is no greatness or power that does not emulate
those of the earth,
There can be no theory of any account unless it corroborate the
theory of the earth,
No politics, song, religion, behaviour, or what not, is of account,
unless it compare with the amplitude of the earth,
Unless it face the exactness, vitality, impartiality, rectitude of
the earth.

I swear I begin to see love with sweeter spasms than that which
 responds love,
 It is that which contains itself, which never invites and never
 refuses.

I swear I begin to see little or nothing in audible words,
 All merges toward the presentation of the unspoken meanings
 of the earth,
 Toward him who sings the songs of the body and of the truths
 of the earth,
 Toward him who makes the dictionaries of words that print
 cannot touch.

I swear I see what is better than to tell the best,
 It is always to leave the best untold

When I undertake to tell the best I find I cannot,
 My tongue is ineffectual on its poets,
 My breath will not be obedient to its organs,
 I become a dumb man.

The best of the earth cannot be told anyhow, all or any is best,
 It is not what you anticipated, it is cheaper, easier, nearer,
 Things are not dismiss'd from the places they held before,
 The earth is just as positive and direct as it was before,
 Facts, religious improvements, politics, trades, are as real as
 before,
 But the soul is also real, it too is positive and direct,
 No reasoning, no proof has establish'd it,
 Undeniable growth has establish'd it.

4

These to echo the tones of souls and the phrases of souls,
 (If they did not echo the phrases of souls what were they then?
 If they had not reference to you in especial what were they
 then?)

I swear I will never henceforth have to do with the faith that
 tells the best,
 I will have to do only with that faith that leaves the best untold.

Say on, sayers! sing on, singers!
 Delve! mould! pile the words of the earth!

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Work on, age after age, nothing is to be lost,
It may have to wait long, but it will certainly come in use,
When the materials are all prepared and ready, the architects
shall appear.

I swear to you the architects shall appear without fail,
I swear to you they will understand you and justify you
The greatest among them shall be he who best knows you and
embraces all and is faithful to all,
He and the rest shall not forget you, they shall perceive that you
are not an iota less than they,
You shall be fully glorified in them

YOUTH, DAY, OLD AGE, AND NIGHT

Youth, large, lusty, young -- youth full of grace, force, fascina-
tion,
Do you know that Old Age may come after you with equal grace,
force, fascination?

Day full-blown and splendid -- day of the immense sun, action,
ambition, laughter,
The Night follows close with millions of stars, and sleep and
restoring darkness

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

SONG OF THE UNIVERSAL

I

COME, said the Muse,
Sing me a song no poet yet has chanted,
Sing me the universal.

In this broad earth of ours,
Amid the measureless grossness and the slag,
Enclosed and safe within its central heart,
Nestles the seed perfection.

By every life a share or more or less,
None born but it is born, conceal'd or unconceal'd the seed is
waiting.

2

Lo! keen-eyed towering science,
As from tall peaks the modern overlooking,
Successive absolute flats issuing.

Yet again, lo! the soul, above all science,
For it has history gather'd like husks around the globe,
For it the entire star myriads roll through the sky,

In spiral routes by long detours,
(As a much-tacking ship upon the sea),
For it the partial to the permanent flowing,
For it the real to the ideal tends.

For it the mystic evolution,
Not the right only justified, what we call evil also justified.

Forth from their masks, no matter what,
From the huge festering trunk, from craft and guile and tears,
Health to emerge and joy, joy universal.

Out of the bulk, the morbid and the shallow,
 Out of the bad majority, the varied countless frauds of men and
 states,
 Electric, antiseptic yet, cleaving, suffusing all,
 Only the good is universal.

3

Over the mountain-growths disease and sorrow,
 An uncaught bird is ever hovering, hovering,
 High in the purer, happier air.

From imperfection's murkiest cloud,
 Darts always forth one ray of perfect light,
 One flash of heaven's glory.

To fashion's, custom's discord,
 To the mad Babel-din, the deafening orgies,
 Soothing each lull a strain is heard, just heard,
 From some far shore the final chorus sounding.

O the blest eyes, the happy hearts.
 That see, that know the guiding thread so fine,
 Along the mighty labyrinth.

4

And thou, America,
 For the scheme's culmination, its thought and its reality,
 For these (not for thyself) thou hast arrived.

Thou too surroundest all.
 Embracing, carrying, welcoming all, thou too by pathways
 broad and new,
 To the ideal tenderest.

The measur'd faiths of other lands, the grandeurs of the past,
 Are not for thee, but grandeurs of thine own,
 Deific faiths and amplitudes, absorbing, comprehending all,
 All eligible to all.

All, all for immortality,
 Love like the light silently wrapping all,
 Nature's amelioration blessing all,

The blossoms, fruits of ages, orchards divine and certain,
Forms, objects, growths, humanities, to spiritual images ripening.

Give me, O God, to sing that thought,
Give me, give him or her I love this quenchless faith,
In Thy ensemble, whatever else withheld withhold not from us,
Belief in plan of Thee enclosed in Time and Space,
Health, peace, salvation universal.

Is it a dream?
Nay but the lack of it the dream,
And failing it life's lore and wealth a dream,
And all the world a dream.

PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

Come my tan faced children,
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready,
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged axes?
Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,
We must march, my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger,
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you youths, Western youths,
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and friendship,
Plain I see you Western youths, see you tramping with the
foremost,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond
the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson;
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer, mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labour and the
march,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the unknown
ways,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We primeval forests felling,
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the mines
within,
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Colorado men are we,
From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and the high
plateaus,
From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting trail we
come,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,
Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the continental
blood intervein'd,
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern, all the
Northern,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O restless, restless race!
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender love
for all!
O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with love for all,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Raise the mighty mother mistress,
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry mistress,
(bend your heads all),
Raise the lang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive, weapon'd
mistress,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

See my children, resolute children,
By those swarms upon our rear we must never yield or falter,
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind us urging,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

On and on the compact ranks,
 With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead quickly
 fill'd,
 Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never
 'stopping,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

O to die advancing on!
 Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour come?
 Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the gap is
 fill'd,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world,
 Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement beat,
 Holding single or together, steady moving to the front, all for us,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,
 All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work,
 All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with their slaves,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the hapless silent lovers,
 All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and the wicked,
 All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the dying,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

I too with my soul and body,
 We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way,
 'Through these shores amid the shadows, with the apparitions
 pressing,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

Lo, the darting, bowling orb!
 Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering suns and planets,
 All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

These are of us, they are with us,
 All for primal needed work, while the followers there in embryo
 wait behind,
 We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel clearing,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you daughters of the West!

O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and you wives!
Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move united.

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies!

(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you have done
your work),

Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and tramp
amid us,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet,

Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious,
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?

Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they lock'd and bolted
doors?

Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Has the night descended?

Was the road of late so toilsome? did we stop discouraged
nodding on our way?

Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to pause oblivious,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Till with sound of trumpet,

Far, far off the daybreak call—hark! how loud and clear I hear
it wind,

Swift! to the head of the army!—swift! spring to your places,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

TO YOU

WHOEVER you are, I fear you are walking the walks of dreams,
I fear these supposed realities are to melt from under your feet
and hands,

Even now your features, joys, speech, house, trade, manners,
troubles, follies, costume, crimes, dissipate away from you,
Your true soul and body appear before me,

They stand forth out of affairs, out of commerce, shops, work,
farms, clothes, the house, buying, selling, eating, drinking,
suffering, dying.

Whoever you are, now I place my hand upon you, that you be
my poem,
I whisper with my lips close to your ear,
I have loved many women and men, but I love none better than
you.

O I have been dilatory and dumb,
I should have made my way straight to you long ago,
I should have blabb'd nothing but you, I should have chanted
nothing but you.

I will leave all and come and make hymns of you,
None has understood you, but I understand you,
None has done justice to you, you have not done justice to
yourself,
None but has found you imperfect, I only find no imperfection
in you,
None but would subordinate you, I only am he who will never
consent to subordinate you,
I only am he who places over you no master, owner, better, God,
beyond what waits intrinsically in yourself.

Painters have painted their swarming groups and the centre-
figure of all,
From the head of the centre-figure spreading a nimbus of gold-
colour'd light,
But I paint myriads of heads, but paint no head without its
nimbus of gold-colour'd light,
From my hand from the brain of every man and woman it
streams, effulgently flowing for ever.

O I could sing such grandeurs and glories about you!
You have not known what you are, you have slumber'd upon
yourself all your life,
Your eyelids have been the same as closed most of the time,
What you have done returns already in mockeries,
(Your thrift, knowledge, prayers, if they do not return in
mockeries, what is their return?)

The mockeries are not you,
 Underneath them and within them I see you lurk,
 I pursue you where none else has pursued you,
 Silence, the desk, the flippant expression, the night, the accu-
 tom'd routine, if these conceal you from others or from
 yourself, they do not conceal you from me, .
 The shaved face, the unsteady eye, the impure complexion, if
 these balk others they do not balk me,
 The pert apparel, the deform'd attitude, drunkenness, greed,
 . premature death, all these I part aside.

There is no endowment in man or woman that is not tallied in
 you,
 There is no virtue, no beauty in man or woman, but as good is
 in you,
 No pluck, no endurance in others, but as good is in you,
 No pleasure waiting for others, but an equal pleasure waits for
 you.

As for me, I give nothing to any one except I give the like care
 fully to you,
 I sing the songs of the glory of none, not God's, sooner than I
 sing the songs of the glory of you.

Whoever you are! claim your own at any hazard!
 These shows of the East and West are tame compared to
 you,
 These immense meadows, these interminable rivers, you are
 immense and interminable as they,
 These furies, elements, storms, motions of Nature, throes of
 apparent dissolution, you are he or she who is master or
 mistress over them,
 Master or mistress in your own right over Nature, elements, pain,
 passion, dissolution.

The hobbles fall from your ankles, you find an unfailing suffi-
 ciency,
 Old or young, male or female, ride, low, rejected by the rest,
 whatever you are promulges itself,
 Through birth, life, death, burial, the means are provided,
 nothing is scantied,
 Through angers, losses, ambition, ignorance, ennui, what you
 are picks its way.

FRANCE

The 18th Year of these States

A GREAT year and place,
 A harsh discordant natal scream out-sounding, to touch the
 mother's heart closer than any yet.

I walk'd the shores of my Eastern sea,
 Heard over the waves the little voice,
 Saw the divine infant where she woke mournfully wailing, amid
 the roar of cannon, curses, shouts, crash of falling buildings,
 Was not so sick from the blood in the gutters running, nor from
 the single corpses, nor those in heaps, nor those borne away
 in the tumbrel,
 Was not so desperate at the battues of death—was not so
 shock'd at the repeated fusillades of the guns.

Pale, silent, stern, what could I say to that long-accrued retribu-
 tion?
 Could I wish humanity different?
 Could I wish the people made of wood and stone?
 Or that there be no justice in destiny or time?

O Liberty! O mate for me!
 Here too the blaze, the grape-shot and the axe, in reserve, to
 fetch them out in case of need,
 Here too, though long repress'd, can never be destroy'd,
 Here too could rise at last murdering and ecstatic,
 Here too demanding full arrears of vengeance.

Hence I sign this salute over the sea,
 And I do not deny that terrible red birth and baptism,
 But remember the little voice that I heard wailing, and wait with
 perfect trust, no matter how long,
 And from to-day, sad and cogent I maintain the bequeath'd
 cause, as for all lands,
 And I send these words to Paris with my love,
 And I guess some chansonniers there will understand them,
 For I guess there is latent music yet in France, floods of it,
 O I hear already the bustle of instruments, they will soon be
 drowning all that would interrupt them,

O I think the east wind brings a triumphal and free march,
It reaches hither, it swells me to joyful madness,
I will run transpose it in words, to justify it,
I will yet sing a song for you ma femme.

MYSELF AND MINE

MYSELF and mine gymnastic ever,
To stand the cold or heat, to take good aim with a gun, to sail a
boat, to manage horses, to beget superb children,
To speak readily and clearly, to feel at home among common
people,
And to hold our own in terrible positions on land and sea.

Not for an embroiderer,
(There will always be plenty of embroiderers, I welcome them
also),
But for the fibre of things and for inherent men and women.

Not to chisel ornaments,
But to chisel with free stroke the heads and limbs of plenteous
supreme Gods, that the States may realise them walking
and talking.

Let me have my own way,
Let others promulge the laws, I will make no account of the laws,
Let others praise eminent men and hold up peace, I hold up
agitation and conflict,
I praise no eminent man, I rebuke to his face the one that was
thought most worthy.

(Who are you? and what are you secretly guilty of all your life?
Will you turn aside all your life? will you grub and chatter all
your life?
And who are you, blabbing by rote, years, pages, languages,
reminiscences,
Unwitting to-day that you do not know how to speak properly
a single word?)

Let others finish specimens, I never finish specimens,
I start them by exhaustless laws as Nature does, fresh and
modern continually.

I give nothing as duties,
 What others give as duties I give as living impulses,
 (Shall I give the heart's action as a duty?)

Let others dispose of questions, I dispose of nothing, I arouse
 unanswerable questions,
 Who are they I see and touch, and what about them?
 What about these likes of myself that draw me so close by tender
 directions and indirections?

I call to the world to distrust the accounts of my friends, but
 listen to my enemies, as I myself do,
 I charge you for ever reject those who would expound me, for I
 cannot expound myself,
 I charge that there be no theory or school founded out of me,
 I charge you to leave all free, as I have left all free.

After me, vista!
 O I see life is not short, but immeasurably long,
 I henceforth tread the world chaste, temperate, an early riser,
 a steady grower,
 Every hour the semen of centuries, and sult of centuries.

I must follow up these continual lessons of the air, water, earth,
 I perceive I have no time to lose.

YEAR OF METEORS

(1859-60)

YEAR of meteors! brooding year!
 I would bind in words retrospective some of your deeds and signs,
 I would sing your contest for the 19th Presidentiad,
 I would sing how an old man, tall, with white hair, mounted the
 scaffold in Virginia,
 (I was at hand, silent I stood with teeth shut close, I watch'd,
 I stood very near you old man when cool and indifferent, but
 trembling with age and your unheal'd wounds you mounted
 the scaffold),
 I would sing in my copious song your census returns of the States,
 The tables of population and products, I would sing of your ships
 and their cargoes,

The proud black ships of Manhattan arriving, some fill'd with
 immigrants, some from the isthmus with cargoes of gold;
 Songs thereof would I sing, to all that hitherward comes would I
 welcome give,
 And you would I sing, fair stripling! welcome to you from me,
 young prince of England!
 (Remember you surging Manhattan's crowds as you pass'd with
 your cortege of nobles?
 There in the crowds stood I, and singled you out with attach-
 ment);
 Nor forget I to sing of the wonder, the ship as she swam up my
 bay,
 Well-shaped and stately the *Great Eastern* swam up my bay, she
 was six hundred feet long,
 Her moving swiftly surrounded by myriads of small craft I
 forget not to sing:
 Nor the comet that came unannounced out of the north flaring
 in heaven.
 Nor the strange huge meteor-procession dazzling and clear
 shooting over our heads,
 (A moment, a moment long it sail'd its balls of unearthly light
 over our heads,
 Then departed, dropt in the night, and was gone);
 Of such, and fitful as they, I sing --with gleams from them would
 I glean and patch these chants,
 Your chants, O year all mottled with evil and good--year of
 forebodings!
 Year of comets and meteors transient and strange--lo! even
 here one equally transient and strange!
 As I flit through you hastily, soon to fall and be gone, what is
 this chant,
 What am I myself but one of your meteors?

WITH ANTECEDENTS

I

With antecedents,
 With my fathers and mothers and the accumulations of past
 ages,
 With all which, had it not been, I would not now be here, as I
 am,
 With Egypt, India, Phenicia, Greece, and Rome,

With the Kelt, the Scandinavian, the Alb, and the Saxon,
 With antique maritime ventures, laws, artisanship, wars, and
 journeys,
 With the poet, the skald, the saga, the myth, and the oracle,
 With the sale of slaves, with enthusiasts, with the troubadour,
 the crusader, and the monk,
 With those old continents whence we have come to this new
 continent,
 With the fading kingdoms and kings over there,
 With the fading religions and priests,
 With the small shores we look back to from our own large and
 present shores,
 With countless years drawing themselves onward and arrived at
 these years,
 You and me arrived—America arrived and making this year,
 This year! sending itself ahead countless years to come.

2

O but it is not the years—it is I, it is You,
 We touch all laws and tally all antecedents,
 We are the skald, the oracle, the monk and the knight, we easily
 include them and more,
 We stand amid time beginningless and endless, we stand amid
 evil and good,
 All swings around us, there is as much darkness as light,
 The very sun swings itself and its system of planets around us,
 Its sun, and its again, all swing around us.

As for me (torn, stormy, amid these vehement days),
 I have the idea of all, and am all and believe in all,
 I believe materialism is true and spiritualism is true, I reject
 no part.

(Have I forgotten any part? anything in the past?
 Come to me whoever and whatever, till I give you recognition.)

I respect Assyria, China, Teutonia, and the Hebrews,
 I adopt each theory, myth, god, and demi-god,
 I see that the old accounts, bibles, genealogies, are true without
 exception,
 I assert that all past days were what they must have been,
 And that they could no-how have been better than they were,

And that to-day is what it must be, and that America is,
And that to-day and America could no-how be better than they
are.

3

In the name of these States and in your and my name, the Past,
And in the name of these States and in your and my name, the
Present time.

I know that the past was great and the future will be great,
And I know that both curiously conjoint in the present time,
(For the sake of him I typify, for the common average man's
sake, your sake if you are he),
And that where I am or you are this present day, there is the
centre of all days, all races,
And there is the meaning to us of all that has ever come of races
and days, or ever will come.

A BROADWAY PAGEANT

I

OVER the Western sea hither from Nippon come,
Courteous, the swart-check'd two-sworded envoys,
Leaning back in their open barouches, bare-headed, impassive,
Ride to-day through Manhattan

Libertad! I do not know whether others behold what I behold,
In the procession along with the nobles of Nippon, the errand-
bearers,
Bringing up the rear, hovering above, around, or in the ranks
marching,
But I will sing you a song of what I behold Libertad.

When million-footed Manhattan unpent descends to her pavements,
When the thunder-cracking guns arouse me with the proud roar
I love,
When the round-mouth'd guns out of the smoke and smell I love
spit their salutes,
When the fire-flashing guns have fully alerted me, and heaven-
clouds canopy my city with a delicate thin haze,
When gorgeous the countless straight stems, the forests at the
wharves, thicken with colours,
When every ship richly drest carries her flag at the peak,
When pennants trail and street-festoons hang from the windows,
When Broadway is entirely given up to foot-passengers and foot-
standers, when the mass is densest,
When the façades of the houses are alive with people, when eyes
gaze riveted tens of thousands at a time,
When the guests from the islands advance, when the pageant
moves forward visible,
When the summons is made, when the answer that waited
thousands of years answers,
I too rising, answering, descend to the pavements, merge with
the crowd, and gaze with them.

Superb-faced Manhattan!

Comrade Americanos! to us, then at last the Orient comes.

To us, my city,

Where our tall-topt marble and iron beauties range on opposite
sides, to walk in the space between,

To-day our Antipodes comes.

The Originatress comes,

The nest of languages, the bequeather of poems, the race of old,

Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with passion,

Sultry with perfume, with ample and flowing garments,

With sunburnt visage, with intense soul and glittering eyes,

The race of Brahma comes.

See my cantabile! these and more are flashing to us from the
procession,

As it moves changing, a kaleidoscope divine it moves changing
before us.

For not the envoys nor the fann'd Japaneer from his island only,
Little and silent the Hindoo appears, the Asiatic continent itself
appears, the past, the dead,

The murky night-morning, of wonder and fable inscrutable,

The envelop'd mysteries, the old and unknown hive-bees,

The north, the sweltering south, eastern Assyria, the Hebrews,
the ancient of ancients,

Vast desolated cities, the gliding present, all of these and more
are in the pageant-procession.

Geography, the world, is in it,

The Great Sea, the brood of islands, Polynesia, the coast beyond,

The coast you henceforth are facing—you Libertad! from your
Western golden shores,

The countries there with their populations, the millions en-masse
are curiously here,

The swarming market-places, the temples with idols ranged along
the sides or at the end, bonze, brahmin, and llama,

Mandarin, farmer, merchant, mechanic, and fisherman,

The singing-girl and the dancing-girl, the ecstatic persons, the
secluded emperors,

Confucius himself, the great poets and heroes, the warriors, the
 castes, all,
 Trooping up, crowding from all directions, from the Altay
 mountains,
 From Thibet, from the four winding and far-flowing rivers of
 China,
 From the southern peninsulas and the demi-continental islands,
 from Malaysia,
 These and whatever belongs to them palpable show forth to me,
 and are seiz'd by me,
 And I am seiz'd by them, and friendlily held by them,
 Till as here them all I chant, Libertad! for themselves and for
 you.

For I too raising my voice join the ranks of this pageant,
 I am the chanter, I chant aloud over the pageant,
 I chant the world on my Western sea,
 I chant copious the islands beyond, thick as stars in the sky,
 I chant the new empire grander than any before, as in a vision
 it comes to me,
 I chant America the mistress, I chant a greater supremacy,
 I chant projected a thousand blooming cities yet in time on
 those groups of sea-islands,
 My sail-ships and steam-ships threading the archipelagoes,
 My stars and stripes fluttering in the wind,
 Commerce opening, the sleep of ages having done its work, races
 reborn, refresh'd,
 Lives, works resumed—the object I know not— but the old, the
 Asiatic renew'd as it must be,
 Commencing from this day surrounded by the world.

3

And you Libertad of the world!
 You shall sit in the middle well-pois'd thousands and thousands
 of years,
 As to-day from one side the nobles of Asia come to you,
 As to-morrow from the other side the queen of England sends
 her eldest son to you.
 The sign is reversing, the orb is enclosed,
 The ring is circled, the journey is done,
 The box-lid is but perceptibly open'd, nevertheless the perfume
 pours copiously out of the whole box.

Young Libertad! with the venerable Asia, the all-mother,
Be considerate with her now and ever hot Libertad, for you
are all,

Bend your proud neck to the long-off mother now sending
messages over the archipelagoes to you,
Bend your proud neck low for once, young Libertad.

Were the children straying westward so long? so wide the
tramping?

Were the precedent dim ages debouching westward from
Paradise so long?

Were the centuries steadily footing it that way, all the while
unknown, for you, for reasons?

They are justified, they are accomplish'd, they shall now be
turn'd the other way also, to travel toward you thence,
They shall now also march obediently eastward for your sake,
Libertad.

SEA-DRIFT

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands, and the fields beyond, where the child
 leaving his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot,
Down from the shower'd halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if
 they were alive,
Out from the patches of briars and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories, sad brother, from the fitful risings and
 fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if
 with tears,
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the
 mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-arous'd words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was
 growing,
Up this seashore in some briars,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,

And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with
 bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing
 them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

*Shine ! shine ! shine !
Pour down your warmth, great sun !
While we bask, we two together.*

*Two together !
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.*

Till of a sudden,
May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appear'd again.

And thereafterward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

*Blow ! blow ! blow !
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore ;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.*

Yes, when the stars glist'n'd,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes, my brother, I know,
 The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,
 For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
 Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the
 shadows,
 Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and
 sights after their sorts,
 The white aims out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
 I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
 Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
 Following you, my brother.

*Soothe ! soothe ! soothe !
 Close on its waves soothes the wave behind,
 And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
 But my love soothes not me, not me.*

*Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
 It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love*

*O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
 With love, with love.*

*O night ! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers ?
 What is that little black thing I see there in the white ?*

*Loud ! loud ! loud !
 Loud I call to you, my love !
 High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
 Surely you must know who is here, is here,
 You must know who I am, my love.*

*Low-hanging moon !
 What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow ?
 O it is the shape, the shape of my mate !
 O moon, do not keep her from me any longer.*

*Land ! land ! O land !
 Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back
 again if you only would,
 For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.*

*O rising stars !
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some
of you.*

*O throat ! O trembling throat !
Sound clearer through the atmosphere !
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.*

*Shake out carols !
Solitary here, the night's carols !
Carols of love, some love ! death's, carols !
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon !
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea !
O reckless despairing carols.*

*But soft ! sink low !
Soft ! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment you hushy-nois'd sea,
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately
to me.*

*Hitler my love !
Here I am, here !
With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you,
This gent'le call is for you my love, for you.*

*Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.*

*O darkness ! O in vain !
O I am very sick and sorrowful.*

*O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea !
O troubled reflection in the sea !
O throat ! O throbbing heart !
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.*

*O past ! O happy life ! O songs of joy !
In the air, in the woods, over fields,*

*Loved / loved / loved / loved / loved /
 But my mate no more, no more with me !
 We two together no more.*

The aria sinking,
 All else continuing, the stars shining,
 The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing,
 With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
 On the sand of Paumanok's shore grey and rustling,
 The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face
 of the sea almost touching,
 The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair
 the atmosphere dallying,
 The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last
 tumultuously bursting,
 The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
 The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
 The colloquy there, the two, each uttering,
 The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
 To the boy's soul's questions sullenly tuning, some drown'd
 secret hissing,
 To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul),
 Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?
 For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have
 heard you,
 Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
 And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer,
 louder, and more sorrowful than yours,
 A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never
 to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
 O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating
 you,
 Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
 Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
 Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what
 there in the night,
 By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
 The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within,
 The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere),
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then (for I will conquer it),
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?— I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-
waves?

Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before day-
break,
Tasp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my arous'd
child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all
over,
Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's grey beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet
garments, bending aside),
The sea whisper'd me.

AS I EBB'D WITH THE OCEAN OF LIFE

1

As I ebb'd with the ocean of life,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walk'd where the ripples continually wash you Paumanok,
Where they rustle up hoarse and sibilant,

Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her castaways,
I musing late in the autumn day, gazing off southward,
Held by this electric self out of the pride of which I utter poems,
Was seiz'd by the spirit that trails in the lines underfoot,
The rim, the sediment that stands for all the water and all the
land of the globe.

Fascinated, my eyes reverting from the south, dropt, to follow
those slender windrows,
Chaff, straw, splinters of wood, weeds, and the sea-gluten,
Scum, scales from shining rocks, leaves of salt-lettuce, left by
the tide,
Miles walking, the sound of breaking waves the other side of me,
Paumanok there and then as I thought the old thought of
likenesses,
These you presented to me you fish-shap'd island,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walk'd with that electric self seeking types.

As I wend to the shores I know not,
As I list to the dirge, the voices of men and women wreck'd,
As I inhale the impalpable breezes that set in upon me,
As the ocean so mysterious rolls toward me closer and closer,
I too but signify at the utmost a little wash'd-up drift,
A few sands and dead leaves to gather,
Gather, and merge myself as part of the sands and drift.

O baffled, balk'd, bent to the very earth,
Oppress'd with myself that I have dared to open my mouth,
Aware now that amid all that blab whose echoes recoil upon me
I have not once had the least idea who or what I am,
But that before all my arrogant poems the real Me stands yet
untouch'd, untold, altogether unreach'd,
Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-congratulatory signs
and bows,
With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I have
written,
Pointing in silence to these songs, and then to the sand beneath.

I perceive I have not really understood anything, not a single
object, and that no man ever can,

Nature here in sight of the sea taking advantage of me to dart
upon me and sting me,
Because I have dared to open my mouth to sing at all.

3

You oceans both, I close with you,
We murmur alike reproachfully rolling sands and drift, knowing
not why,
These little shreds indeed standing for you and me and all.

You friable shore with trails of débris,
You fish-shaped island, I take what is underfoot,
What is yours is mine, my father.

I too Paumanok,
I too have bubbled up, floated the measureless float, and been
wash'd on your shores,
I too am but a trail of drift and débris,
I too leave little wrecks upon you, you fish-shaped island.

I throw myself upon your breast, my father,
I cling to you so that you cannot unloose me,
I hold you so firm till you answer me something.

Kiss me, my father,
Touch me with your lips as I touch those I love,
Breathe to me while I hold you close the secret of the mur-
muring I envy.

4

Ebb, ocean of life (the flow will return),
Cease not your moaning you fierce old mother,
Endlessly cry for your castaways, but fear not, deny not me,
Rustle not up so hoarse and angry against my feet as I touch
you or gather from you.

I mean tenderly by you and all,
I gather for myself and for this phantom looking down where we
lead, and following me and mine.

Me and mine, loose windrows, little corpses,
Froth, snowy white, and bubbles,

(See, from my dead lips the ooze exuding at last,
 See, the prismatic colours glistening and rolling),
 Tufts of straw, sands, fragments,
 Buoy'd hither from many moods, one contradicting another,
 From the storm, the long calm, the darkness, the swell,
 Musing, pondering, a breath, a briny tear, a dab of liquid or soil,
 Up just as much out of fathomless workings fermented and
 thrown,
 A limp blossom or two, torn, just as much over waves floating,
 drifted at random,
 Just as much for us that sobbing dirge of Nature,
 Just as much whence we come that blare of the cloud-trumpets,
 We, capricious, brought hither we know not whence, spread out
 before you,
 You up there walking or sitting,
 Whoever you are, we too lie in drifts at your feet.

TEARS! tears! tears!

In the night, in solitude, tears,

On the white shore dripping, dripping, suck'd in by the sand,

Tears, not a star shining, all dark and desolate.

Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled head:

O who is that ghost? that form in the dark, with tears?

What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd there on the sand?

Streaming tears, sobbing tears, throes, choked with wild cries;

O storm, embodied, rising, careering with swift steps along the
 beach!

O wild and dismal night storm, with wind—O helching and
 desperate!

O shade so sedate and decorous by day, with calm countenance
 and regulated pace,

But away at night as you fly, none looking—O then the un-
 loosen'd ocean,

Of tears! tears! tears!

TO THE MAN-OF-WAR-BIRD

THOU who hast slept all night upon the storm,
 Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions,
 (Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascended'st,

And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee),
 Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
 As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee,
 (Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast).

Far, far at sea,
 After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,
 With re-appearing day as now so happy and serene,
 The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
 The limpid spread of air cerulean,
 Thou also re-appearest.

Thou born to match the gale (thou art all wings),
 To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,
 Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,
 Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms
 gyrating,
 At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn America,
 That sport'st amid the lightning flash and thunder-cloud,
 In them, in thy experiences, haul'st thou my soul,
 What joys! what joys were thine!

.. ABOARD AT A SHIP'S HELM

ABOARD at a ship's helm,
 A young steersman steering with care.

Through fog on a sea coast dolefully ringing,
 An ocean-bell-- O a warning bell, rock'd by the waves.

O you give good notice indeed, you bell by the sea-reefs ringing,
 Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its wreck-place.

For as on the alert, O steersman, you mind the loud admonition,
 The bows turn, the freighted ship tacking speeds away under
 her grey sails,
 The beautiful and noble ship with all her precious wealth speeds
 away gaily and safe.

But O the ship, the immortal ship! O ship aboard the ship!
 Ship of the body, ship of the soul, voyaging, voyaging, voyaging.

ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT

On the beach at night,
Stands a child with her father,
Watching the east, the autumn sky.

Up through the darkness,
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black masses
 spreading,
Lower sullen and fast athwart and down the sky,
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the east,
Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter,
And nigh at hand, only a very little above,
Swim the delicate sisters the Pleiades.

From the beach the child holding the hand of her father,
Those burial-clouds that lower victorious soon to devour all,
Watching, silently weeps.

Weep not, child,
Weep not, my darling,
With these kisses let me remove your tears,
The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,
They shall not long possess the sky, they devour the stars only
 in apparition,
Jupiter shall emerge, be patient, watch again another night, the
 Pleiades shall emerge,
They are immortal, all those stars both silvery and golden shall
 shine out again,
The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again, they
 endure,
The vast immortal suns and the long-enduring pensive moons
 shall again shine.

Then, dearest child, mournest thou only for Jupiter?
Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?

Something there is,
(With my lips soothing thee, adding I whisper,
I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indirection),
Something there is more immortal even than the stars,
(Many the burials, many the days and nights passing away),

Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous Jupiter,
Longer than sun or any revolving satellite,
Or the radiant sisters the Pleiades.

THE WORLD BELOW THE BRINE

THE world below the brine,
Forests at the bottom of the sea, the branches and leaves,
Sea-lettuce, vast lichens, strange flowers and seeds, the thick
tangle, openings, and pink turf,
Different colours, pale grey and green, purple, white, and gold,
the play of light through the water,
Dumb swimmers there among the rocks, coral, gluten, grass,
rushes, and the aliment of the swimmers,
Sluggish existences grazing there suspended, or slowly crawling
close to the bottom,
The sperm-whale at the surface blowing air and spray, or dis-
porting with his flukes,
The leaden-eyed shark, the walrus, the turtle, the hairy sea-
leopard, and the sting-ray,
Passions there, wars, pursuits, tribes, sight in those ocean-depths,
breathing that thick-breathing air, as so many do,
The change thence to the sight here, and to the subtle air
breathed by beings like us who walk this sphere,
The change onward from ours to that of beings who walk other
spheres.

ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT ALONE

ON the beach at night alone,
As the old mother sways her to and fro singing her husky song,
As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a thought of the
clef of the universes and of the future.

A vast similitude interlocks all,
All spheres, grown, ungrown, small, large, suns, moons, planets,
All distances of place however wide,
All distances of time, all inanimate forms,
All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so different, or in
different worlds,
All gaseous, watery, vegetable, mineral processes, the fishes, the
brutes,

All nations, colours, barbarisms; civilisations, languages,
 All identities that have existed or may exist on this globe, or
 any globe,
 All lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future,
 This vast similitude spans them, and always has spann'd,
 And shall for ever span them and compactly hold and enclose
 them

SONG FOR ALL SEAS, ALL SHIPS

1

To-day a rude brief recitative,
 Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal,
 Of unnamed heroes in the ships—of waves spreading and
 spreading far as the eye can reach,
 Of flashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing,
 And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations,
 Fitful, like a surge.

Of sea captains young or old, and the mates, and of all intrepid
 sailors,
 Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise
 nor death dismay,
 Pick'd sparingly without noise by thee, old ocean, chosen by thee,
 Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and untest
 nations,
 Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,
 Indomitable, untamed as thee.

(Ever the heroes on water or on land, by ones or twos appearing,
 Ever the stock preserv'd and never lost, though rare, enough for
 seed preserv'd.)

2

Flaunt out, O sea, your separate flags of nations!
 Flaunt out visible as ever the various ship-signals!
 But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the soul of man
 one flag above all the rest,
 A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate
 above death,
 Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors and mates,
 And all that went down doing their duty,

Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains young
 or old,
 A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all these
 sailors.
 All seas, all ships.

PATROLLING BARNEGAT

WILD, wild the storm, and the sea high running,
 Steady the roar of the gale, with incessant undertone muttering,
 Shouts of demoniac laughter fitfully piercing and pealing,
 Waves, air, midnight, their savagest trinity lashing,
 Out in the shadows there milk-white combs careering,
 On beachy slush and sand spirts of snow fierce slanting,
 Where through the murk the easterly death wind breasting,
 Through cutting swirl and spray watchful and firm advancing,
 (That in the distance! is that a wreck? is the red signal flaring?)
 Slush and sand of the beach tireless till daylight wending,
 Steadily, slowly, through hoarse roar never remitting,
 Along the midnight edge by those milk-white combs careering,
 A group of dim, weird forms, struggling, the night confronting,
 That savage trinity warily watching.

AFTER THE SEA-SHIP

AFTER the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
 After the white-grey sails taut to their spars and ropes,
 Below, a myriad myriad waves hastening, lifting up their necks,
 Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,
 Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,
 Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven, emulous waves,
 Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant, with
 curves,
 Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaced the surface,
 Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean yearningly
 flowing,
 The wake of the sea-ship after she passes, flashing and frolicsome
 under the sun,
 A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many
 fragments,
 Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.

BY THE ROADSIDE

A BOSTON BALLAD

(1854)

To get betimes in Boston town I rose this morning early,
Here's a good place at the corner, I must stand and see the
show.

Clear the way there Jonathan!
Way for the President's marshal—way for the government
cannon!
Way for the Federal loot and dragoons (and the apparitions
copiously tumbling).

I love to look on the Stars and Stripes, I hope the fifes will play
Yankee Doodle.

How bright shine the cutlasses of the foremost troops!
Every man holds his revolver, marching stiff through Boston
town.

A fog follows, antiques of the same come limping.
Some appear wooden-legged, and some appear bandaged and
bloodless.

Why this is indeed a show—it has called the dead out of the
earth!
The old graveyards of the hills have hurried to see!
Phantoms! phantoms countless by flank and rear!
Cock'd hats of mothly mould—crutches made of mist!
Arms in slings—old men leaning on young men's shoulders.

What troubles you Yankee phantoms? what is all this chatter-
ing of bare gums?
Does the ague convulse your limbs? do you mistake your
crutches for firelocks and level them?

If you blind your eyes with tears you will not see the President's
marshal,

If you groan such groans you might balk the government cannon,

For shame old maniacs—bring down those toss'd arms, and let
your white hair be,

Here gape your great grandsons, their wives gaze at them from
the windows,

See how well dress'd, see how orderly they conduct themselves.

Worse and worse—can't you stand it? are you retreating?

Is this hour with the living too dead for you?

Retreat then—pell-mell!

To your graves—back—back to the hills old lingers!

I do not think you belong here anyhow.

But there is one thing that belongs here—shall I tell you what
it is, gentlemen of Boston?

I will whisper it to the Mayor, he shall send a committee to
England,

They shall get a grant from the Parliament, go with a cart to the
royal vault,

Dig out King George's coffin, unwrap him quick from the grave-
clothes, box up his bones for a journey,

Find a swift Yankee clipper—here is freight for you, black-
bell'd clipper,

Up with your anchor—shake out your sails—steer straight
toward Boston bay.

Now call for the President's marshal again, bring out the govern-
ment cannon,

Fetch home the roarers from Congress, make another procession,
guard it with foot and dragoons.

This centre-piece for them;

Look, all orderly citizens—look from the windows, women!

The committee open the box, set up the regal ribs, glue those
that will not stay,

Clap the skull on top of the ribs, and clap a crown on top of the
skull.

You have got your revenge, old buster—the crown is come to its own, and more than its own.

Stick your hands in your pockets, Jonathan—you are a made man from this day,
You are mighty cute—and here is one of your bargains.

EUROPE

'The 72nd and 73rd Years of These States

SUDDENLY out of its stale and drowsy lair, the lair of slaves,
Like lightning it le'pt forth half startled at itself,
Its feet upon the ashes and the rags, its hands tight to the throats
of kings.

O hope and faith!
O aching close of exiled patriots' lives!
O many a sicken'd heart!
Turn back unto this day and make yourselves afresh.

And you, paid to defile the People—you liars, mark!
Not for numberless agonies, murders, lusts,
For court thieving in its manifold mean forms, worming from
his simplicity the poor man's wages,
For many a promise sworn by royal lips and broken and laugh'd
at in the breaking,
Then in their power not for all these did the blows strike revenge,
or the heads of the nobles fall;
The People scorn'd the ferocity of kings.

But the sweetness of mercy brew'd bitter destruction, and the
frighten'd monarchs come back,
Each comes in state with his train, hangman, priest, tax-gatherer,
Soldier, lawyer, lord, jailer, and sycophant.

Yet behind all lowering stealing, lo, a shape,
Vague as the night, draped interminably, head, front, and form,
in scarlet folds,
Whose face and eyes none may see,
Out of its robes only this, the red robes lifted by the arm,
One finger crook'd pointed high over the top, like the head of a
snake appears.

Meanwhile corpses lie in new-made graves, bloody corpses of
 young men,
 The rope of the gibbet hangs heavily, the bullets of peace are
 flying, the creatures of power laugh aloud,
 And all these things bear fruits, and they are good.

Those corpses of young men,
 Those martyrs that hang from the gibbets, those hearts pierc'd
 • by the grey lead,
 Cold and motionless as they seem live elsewhere with un-
 slaughter'd vitality.

They live in other young men, O kings!
 They live in brothers again ready to defy you,
 They were purified by death, they were taught and exalted.

Not a grave of the murder'd for freedom but grows seed for
 freedom, in its turn to bear seed,
 Which the winds carry afar and re sow, and the rains and the
 snows nourish.

Not a disembodied spirit can the weapons of tyrants let loose,
 But it stalks invisibly over the earth, whispering, counselling,
 cautioning.

Liberty, let others despair of you—I never despair of you.

Is the house shut? is the master away?
 Nevertheless, be ready, be not weary of watching,
 He will soon return, his messengers come anon.

A HAND-MIRROR

HOLD it up sternly—see this it sends back (who is it? is it
 you?)
 Outside fair costume, within ashes and filth,
 No more a flashing eye, no more a sonorous voice or springy
 step,
 Now some slave's eye, voice, hands, step,
 A drunkard's breath, unwholesome eater's face, venerealee's
 flesh,

Lungs rotting away piecemeal, stomach sour and cankerous,
Joints rheumatic, bowels clogged with abomination,
Blood circulating dark and poisonous streams,
Words babble, hearing and touch callous,
No brain, no heart left, no magnetism of sex;
Such from one look in this looking-glass ere you go hence,
Such a result so soon—and from such a beginning!

GODS

LOVER divine and perfect Comrade,
Waiting content, invisible yet, but certain,
Be thou my God.

Thou, thou, the Ideal Man,
Fair, able, beautiful, content, and loving,
Complete in body and dilate in spirit,
Be thou my God.

O Death (for Life has served its turn),
Opener and usher to the heavenly mansion,
Be thou my God.

Aught, aught of mightiest, best I see, conceive, or know,
(To break the stagnant tie—thee, thee to free, O soul),
Be thou my God.

All great ideas, the races' aspirations,
All heroisms, deeds of rapt enthusiasts,
Be ye my Gods.

Or Time and Space,
Or shape of Earth divine and wondrous,
Or some fair shape I viewing, worship,
Or lustrous orb of sun or star by night,
Be ye my Gods.

GERMS

FORMS, qualities, lives, humanity, language, thoughts,
The ones known, and the ones unknown, the ones on the stars,
The stars themselves, some shaped, others unshaped,

Wonders as of those countries, the soil, trees, cities, inhabitants,
whatever they may be,
Splendid suns, the moons and rings, the countless combinations
and effects,
Such-like, and as good as such-like, visible here or anywhere,
stand provided for in a handful of space, which I extend
my arm and half enclose with my hand,
That containing the start of each and all, the virtue, the germs
of all.

THOUGHTS

Of ownership—as if one fit to own things could not at pleasure
enter upon all, and incorporate them into himself or herself;
Of vista—suppose some sight in arriere through the formative
chaos, presuming the growth, fullness, life, now attain'd on
the journey,
(But I see the road continued, and the journey ever continued);
Of what was once lacking on earth, and in due time has become
supplied—and of what will yet be supplied,
Because all I see and know I believe to have its main purport in
what will yet be supplied.

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and
measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with
much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
'Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

PERFECTIONS

ONLY themselves understand themselves and the like of them-
selves,
As souls only understand souls.

O ME! O LIFE!

O ME! O life! of the questions of these recurring,
 Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,
 Of myself for ever reproaching myself (for who more foolish than
 I, and who more faithless?),
 Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the
 struggle ever renew'd,
 Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I
 see around me,
 Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me inter-
 twined,
 The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these,
 O me, O life?

Answer

That you are here—that life exists and identity,
 That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.

TO A PRESIDENT

ALL you are doing and saying is to America dangled mirages,
 You have not learn'd of Nature—of the politics of Nature
 you have not learn'd the great amplitude, rectitude, im-
 partiality,
 You have not seen that only such as they are for these States,
 And that what is less than they must sooner or later lift off from
 these States.

I SIT AND LOOK OUT

I sit and look upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all
 oppression and shame,
 I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men at anguish with
 themselves, remorseful after deeds done,
 I see in low life the mother misused by her children, dying,
 neglected, gaunt, desperate,
 I see the wife misused by her husband, I see the treacherous
 seducer of young women,
 I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love attempted
 to be hid, I see these sights on the earth,
 I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny, I see martyrs
 and prisoners,

I observe a famine at sea, I observe the sailors casting lots who
 shall be kill'd to preserve the lives of the rest,
 I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons
 upon labourers, the poor, and upon negroes, and the like;
 All these—all the meanness and agony without end I sitting
 look out upon,
 See, hear, and am silent.

TO RICH GIVERS

What you give me I cheerfully accept,
 A little sustenance, a hut and garden, a little money, as I
 rendezvous with my poems,
 A traveller's lodging and breakfast as I journey through the
 States—why should I be ashamed to own such gifts? why
 to advertise for them?
 For I myself am not one who bestows nothing upon man and
 woman,
 For I bestow upon any man or woman the entrance to all the
 gifts of the universe.

THE DALLIANCE OF THE EAGLES

SKIRTING the river road (my forenoon walk, my rest),
 Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the dalliance of the
 eagles,
 The rushing amorous contact high in space together,
 The clinching, interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyrating wheel,
 Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight tripping,
 In tumbling, turning, clustering loops, straight downward falling,
 Till o'er the river pois'd, the twain yet one, a moment's lull,
 A motionless still balance in the air, then parting, talons loosing,
 Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting, their separate
 diverse flight,
 She hers, he his, pursuing.

ROAMING IN THOUGHT

(After reading HEGEL)

ROAMING in thought over the Universe, I saw the little that is
 Good steadily hastening towards immortality,
 And the vast all that is call'd Evil I saw hastening to merge
 itself and become lost and dead.

A FARM PICTURE

THROUGH the ample open door of the peaceful country barn,
A sunlit pasture field with cattle and horses feeding,
And haze and vista, and the far horizon fading away.

A CHILD'S AMAZE

SILENT and amazed even when a little boy,
I remember I heard the preacher every Sunday put God in his
statements,
As contending against some being or influence.

THE RUNNER

ON a flat road runs the well-train'd runner,
He is lean and sinewy with muscular legs,
He is thinly clothed, he leans forward as he runs,
With lightly closed fists and arms partially rais'd.

BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

WOMEN sit or move to and fro, some old, some young,
The young are beautiful—but the old are more beautiful than
the young.

MOTHER AND BABE

I SEE the sleeping babe nestling the breast of its mother,
The sleeping mother and babe—hush'd, I study them long and
long.

THOUGHT

OR obedience, faith, adhesiveness;
As I stand aloof and look there is to me something profoundly
affecting in large masses of men following the lead of those
who do not believe in men.

VISOR'D

A MASK, a perpetual natural disguiser of herself,
 Concealing her face, concealing her form,
 Changes and transformations every hour, every moment,
 Falling upon her even when she sleeps.

THOUGHT

OF Justice—as if Justice could be anything but the same ample
 law, expounded by natural judges and saviours,
 As if it might be this thing or that thing, according to decisions,

GLIDING O'ER ALL

GLIDING o'er all, through all,
 Through Nature, Time, and Space,
 As a ship on the waters advancing,
 The voyage of the soul—not life alone,
 Death, many deaths I'll sing.

HAST NEVER COME TO THEE AN HOUR

HAST never come to thee an hour,
 A sudden gleam divine, precipitating, bursting all these bubbles,
 fashions, wealth?
 These eager business aims—books, politics, art, amours,
 To utter nothingness?

THOUGHT

OF Equality—as if it harm'd me, giving others the same chances
 and rights as myself—as if it were not indispensable to
 my own rights that others possess the same.

TO OLD AGE

I SEE in you the estuary that enlarges and spreads itself grandly
 as it pours in the great sea.

LOCATIONS AND TIMES

LOCATIONS and times—what is it in me that meets them all,
 whenever and wherever, and makes me at home?
 Forms, colours, densities, odours—what is it in me that corre-
 sponds with them?

OFFERINGS

A THOUSAND perfect men and women appear,
 Around each gathers a cluster of friends, and gay children and
 youths, with offerings.

TO THE STATES

To Identify the 16th, 17th, or 18th Presidentiad

WHY reclining, interrogating? why myself and all drowsing?
 What deepening twilight—scum floating atop of the waters,
 Who are they as bats and night-dogs askant in the capitol?
 What a filthy Presidentiad! (O South, your torrid suns' O
 North, your arctic freezings!)

Are those really Congressinen; are those the great Judges? is
 that the President?

Then I will sleep awhile yet, for I see that these States sleep, for
 reasons;

(With gathering murk, with muttering thunder and lambent
 shoots we all duly awake,
 South, North, East, West, inland and seaboard, we will surely
 awake).

DRUM-TAPS

FIRST O SONGS FOR A PRELUDE

First O songs for a prelude,
Lightly strike on the stretch'd tympanum pride and joy in my
city,
How she led the rest to arms, how she gave the cue,
How at once with lithe limb unwaiting a moment she sprang,
(O superb! O Manhattan, my own, my peerless!
O strongest you in the hour of danger, in crisis! O truer than
steel!)
How you sprang—how you threw off the costumes of peace with
indifferent hand,
How your soft opera-music changed, and the drum and life were
heard in their stead,
How you led to the war (that shall serve for our prelude, songs
of soldiers),
How Manhattan drum-taps led.

Forty years had I in my city seen soldiers parading,
Forty years as a pageant, till unawares the lady of this teeming
and turbulent city,
Sleepless amid her ships, her houses, her incalculable wealth,
With her million children around her, suddenly,
At dead of night, at news from the south,
Incens'd struck with clench'd hand the pavement.

A shock electric, the night sustain'd it,
Till with ominous hum our hive at daybreak pour'd out its
myriads.
From the houses then and the workshops, and through all the
doorways,
Leapt they tumultuous, and lo! Manhattan arming.

To the drum-taps prompt,
The young men falling in and arming,
The mechanics arming (the trowel, the jack-plane, the black-
smith's hammer, tost aside with precipitation),

The lawyer leaving his office and arming, the judge leaving the court,
 The driver deserting his wagon in the street, jumping down, throwing the reins abruptly down on the horses' backs,
 The salesman leaving the store, the boss, book-keeper, porter, all leaving;
 Squads gather everywhere by common consent and arm,
 The new recruits, even boys, the old men show them how to wear their accoutrements, they buckle the straps carefully,
 Outdoors arming, indoors arming, the flash of the musket-barrels,
 The white tents cluster in camps, the arm'd sentries around, the sunrise cannon and again at sunset,
 Arm'd regiments arrive every day, pass through the city, and embark from the wharves,
 (How good they look as they tramp down to the river, sweaty, with their guns on their shoulders!
 How I love them! how I could hug them, with their brown faces and their clothes and knapsacks cover'd with dust!)
 The blood of the city up—arm'd! arm'd! the cry everywhere,
 The flags flung out from the steeples of churches and from all the public buildings and stores,
 The tearful parting, the mother kisses her son, the son kisses his mother,
 (Loth is the mother to part, yet not a word does she speak to detain him),
 The tumultuous escort, the ranks of policemen preceding, clearing the way,
 The unpent enthusiasm, the wild cheers of the crowd for their favourites,
 The artillery, the silent cannons bright as gold, drawn along, rumble lightly over the stones,
 (Silent cannons, soon to cease your silence, Soon unlimber'd to begin the red business);
 All the mutter of preparation, all the determin'd arming,
 The hospital service, the lint, bandages, and medicines,
 The women volunteering for nurses, the work begun for in earnest, no mere parade now;
 War! an arm'd race is advancing! the welcome for battle, no turning away;
 War! be it weeks, months, or years, an arm'd race is advancing to welcome it.

Mannahatta a-march—and it's O to sing it well!
It's O for a manly life in the camp.

And the sturdy artillery,
The guns bright as gold, the work for giants, to serve well the
guns,
Unlimber them! (no more as the past forty years for salutes for
courtesies merely,
Put in something now besides powder and wadding).

And you lady of ships, you Mannahatta,
Old matron of this proud, friendly, turbulent city,
Often in peace and wealth you were pensive or covertly frown'd
amid all your children,
But now you smile with joy exulting old Mannahatta.

EIGHTEEN SIXTY-ONE

ARM'D year—year of the struggle,
No dainty rhymes or sentimental love verses for you, terrible year,
Not you as some pale poetling seated at a desk lisping cadenzas
piano,
But as a strong man erect, clothed in blue clothes, advancing,
carrying a rifle on your shoulder,
With well-gristled body and sunburnt face and hands, with a
knife in the belt at your side,
As I heard you shouting loud, your sonorous voice ringing
across the continent,
Your masculine voice, O year, as rising amid the great cities,
Amid the men of Manhattan I saw you as one of the workmen,
the dwellers in Manhattan,
Or with large steps crossing the prairies out of Illinois and
Indiana,
Rapidly crossing the West with springy gait and descending the
Alleghanies,
Or down from the great lakes or in Pennsylvania, or on deck
along the Ohio river,
Or southward along the Tennessee or Cumberland rivers, or at
Chattanooga on the mountain top,
Saw I your gait and saw I your sinewy limbs clothed in blue,
bearing weapons, robust year,
Heard your determin'd voice launch'd forth again and again,

Year that suddenly sang by the mouths of the round-lipp'd
cannon,
I repeat you, hurrying, crashing, sad, distracted year.

BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows—through doors—burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,
Into the school where the scholar is studying;
Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he have
now with his bride,
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field or gather-
ing his grain,
So fierce you whirr and pound you drums—so shrill you bugles
blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in the
streets,
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses? no
sleepers must sleep in those beds,
No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or speculators—
would they continue?
Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?
Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the
judge?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—your bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Make no parley—stop for no expostulation,
Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer,
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,
Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting
the hearses,
So strong you thump, O terrible drums—so loud you bugles blow.

FROM PAUMANOK STARTING I FLY LIKE A BIRD

From Paumanok starting I fly like a bird,
Around and around to soar to sing the idea of all,
To the north betaking myself to sing there arctic songs,

To Kanada till I absorb Kanada in myself, to Michigan then,
 To Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, to sing their songs (these are
 inimitable);
 Then to Ohio and Indiana to sing theirs, to Missouri and Kansas
 and Arkansas to sing theirs,
 To Tennessee and Kentucky, to the Carolinas and Georgia to
 sing theirs,
 To Texas and so along up toward California, to roam accepted
 everywhere;
 To sing first (to the tap of the war-drum if need be),
 The idea of all, of the Western world one and inseparable,
 And then the song of each member of these States.

SONG OF THE BANNER AT DAYBREAK

Poet

O a new song, a free song,
 Flapping, flapping, flapping, flapping, by sounds, by voices
 clearer,
 By the wind's voice and that of the drum,
 By the banner's voice and child's voice and sea's voice and
 father's voice,
 Low on the ground and high in the air,
 On the ground where father and child stand,
 In the upward air where their eyes turn,
 Where the banner at daybreak is flapping.

Words! book-words! what are you?
 Words no more, for hearken and see,
 My song is there in the open air, and I must sing,
 With the banner and pennant a-flapping.

I'll weave the chord and twine in,
 Man's desire and babe's desire, I'll twine them in, I'll put in life,
 I'll put the bayonet's flashing point, I'll let bullets and slugs
 whizz,
 (As one carrying a symbol and menace far into the future,
 Crying with trumpet voice, *Arouse and beware! Beware and
 arouse!*)
 I'll pour the verse with streams of blood, full of volition, full of
 joy,
 Then loosen, launch forth, to go and compete,
 With the banner and pennant a-flapping.

Pennant

Come up here, bard, bard,
 Come up here, soul, soul,
 Come up here, dear little child,
 To fly in the clouds and winds with me, and play with the
 measureless light.

Child

Father, what is that in the sky beckoning to me with long finger?
 And what does it say to me all the while?

Father

Nothing, my babe, you see in the sky,
 And nothing at all to you it says—but look you, my babe,
 Look at these dazzling things in the houses, and see you the
 money-shops opening,
 And see you the vellicles preparing to crawl along the streets
 with goods;
 These, ah, these, how valued and toil'd for these!
 How envied by all the earth.

Poet

Fresh and rosy red the sun is mounting high,
 On floats the sea in distant blue careering through its channels,
 On floats the wind over the breast of the sea setting in toward
 land,
 The great steady wind from west or west-by-south,
 Floating so buoyant with milk-white foam on the waters.

But I am not the sea nor the red sun,
 I am not the wind with girlish laughter,
 Not the immense wind which strengthens, not the wind which
 lashes,
 Not the spirit that ever lashes its own body to terror and death,
 But I am that which unseen comes and sings, sings, sings,
 Which babbles in brooks and scoots in showers on the land,
 Which the birds know in the woods mornings and evenings,
 And the shore-sands know and the hissing wave, and that banner
 and pennant,
 Aloft there flapping and flapping.

Child

O father it is alive—it is full of people—it has children.
 O now it seems to me it is talking to its children,
 I hear it—it talks to me—O it is wonderful!
 O it stretches—it spreads and runs so fast—O my father,
 It is so broad it covers the whole sky.

Father

Cease, cease, my foolish babe,
 What you are saying is sorrowful to me, much it displeases me;
 Behold with the rest again I say, behold not banners and
 pennants aloft,
 But the well-prepared pavements behold, and mark the solid-
 wall'd houses,

Banner and Pennant

Speak to the child O bard out of Manhattan,
 To our children all, or north or south of Manhattan,
 Point this day, leaving all the rest, to us over all—and yet we
 know not why,
 For what are we, mere strips of cloth profiting nothing,
 Only flapping in the wind?

Poet

I hear and see not strips of cloth alone,
 I hear the tramp of armies, I hear the challenging sentry,
 I hear the jubilant shouts of millions of men, I hear Liberty!
 I hear the drums beat and the trumpets blowing,
 I myself move abroad swift-rising flying then,
 I use the wings of the land-bird and use the wings of the sea-
 bird, and look down as from a height,
 I do not deny the precious results of peace, I see populous cities
 with wealth incalculable,
 I see numberless farms, I see the farmers working in their fields
 or barns,
 I see mechanics working, I see buildings everywhere founded,
 going up, or finish'd,
 I see trains of cars swiftly speeding along railroad tracks drawn
 by the locomotives,
 I see the stores, depôts, of Boston, Baltimore, Charleston, New
 Orleans,

I see far in the West the immense area of grain, I dwell awhile
 hovering,
 I pass to the lumber forests of the North, and again to the
 Southern plantation, and again to California;
 Sweeping the whole I see the countless profit, the busy gather-
 ings, earn'd wages,
 See the Identity formed out of thirty-eight spacious and haughty
 States (and many more to come),
 See forts on the shores of harbours, see ships sailing in and out;
 Then over all (aye! aye!) my little and lengthen'd pennant
 shaped like a sword,
 Runs swiftly up indicating war and defiance—and now the
 halyards have rais'd it,
 Side of my banner broad and blue, side of my starry banner,
 Discarding peace over all the sea and land.

Banner and Pennant

Yet louder, higher, stronger, bard! yet farther, wider cleave!
 No longer let our children deem us riches and peace alone,
 We may be terror and carnage, and are so now,
 Not now are we any one of these spacious and haughty States
 (nor any five, nor ten),
 Nor market nor depôt we, nor money-bank in the city,
 But these and all, and the brown and spreading land, and the
 mines below, are ours,
 And the shores of the sea are ours, and the rivers great and small,
 And the fields they moisten, and the crops and the fruits are ours,
 Bays and channels and ships sailing in and out are ours—while
 we over all,
 Over the area spread below, the three or four millions of square
 miles, the capitals,
 The forty millions of people,—O bard! in life and death supreme,
 We, even we, henceforth flaunt out masterful, high up above,
 Not for the present alone, for a thousand years chanting through
 you,
 This song to the soul of one poor little child.

Child

O my father, I like not the houses,
 They will never to me be anything, nor do I like money,
 But to mount up there I would like, O father dear, that banner
 I like,
 That pennant I would be and must be.

Father

Child of mine, you fill me with anguish,
To be that pennant would be too fearful,
Little you know what it is this day, and after this day, for ever,
It is to gain nothing, but risk and defy everything,
Forward to stand in front of wars—and O, such wars!—what
have you to do with them?
With passions of demons, slaughter, premature death?

Banner

Demons and death then I sing,
Put in all, aye all will I, sword-shaped pennant for war,
And a pleasure new and ecstatic, and the prattled yearning of
children,
Blent with the sounds of the peaceful land and the liquid wash
of the sea,
And the black ships fighting on the sea envelop'd in smoke,
And the icy cool of the far, far north, with rustling cedars and
pines,
And the whirr of drums and the sound of soldiers marching, and
the hot sun shining south,
And the beach-waves combing over the beach on my Eastern
shore, and my Western shore the same,
And all between those shores, and my ever running Mississippi
with bends and chutes,
And my Illinois fields, and my Kansas fields, and my fields of
Missouri,
The Continent, devoting the whole identity without reserving
an atom,
Pour in! whelm that which asks, which sings, with all and the
yield of all,
Fusing and holding, claiming, devouring the whole,
No more with tender lip, nor musical labial sound,
But out of the night emerging for good, our voice persuasive no
more,
Croaking like crows here in the wind.

Poet

My limbs, my veins dilate, my theme is clear at last,
Banner so broad advancing out of the night, I sing you haughty
and resolute,

I burst through where I waited long, too long, deafen'd and
blinded,
My hearing and tongue are come to me (a little child taught
me),
I hear from above, O pennant of war, your ironical call and
demand,
Insensate! insensate! (yet I at any rate chant you) O
banner!
Not houses of peace indeed are you, nor any nor all their prosper-
ity (if need be, you shall again have every one of those
houses to destroy them,
You thought not to destroy those valuable houses, standing fast,
full of comfort, built with money,
May they stand fast, then? not an hour except you above them
and all stand fast);
O banner, not money so precious are you, not farm produce you,
nor the material good nutriment,
Nor excellent stores, nor landed on wharves from the
ships,
Not the superb ships with sail-power or steam-power, fetching
and carrying cargoes,
Nor machinery, vehicles, trade, nor revenues — but you as hence-
forth I see you,
Running up out of the night, bringing your cluster of stars (ever-
enlarging stars),
Divider of daybreak you, cutting the air, touch'd by the sun,
measuring the sky,
(Passionately seen and yearn'd for by one poor little child,
While others remain busy or smartly talking, for ever teaching
thrift, thrift);
O you up there! O pennant! where you undulate like a snake
hissing so curious,
Out of reach, an idea only, yet furiously fought for, risking bloody
death, loved by me,
So loved—O you banner leading the day with stars brought from
the night!
Valueless, object of eyes, over all and demanding all—(absolute
owner of all)—O banner and pennant!
I too leave the rest—great as it is, it is nothing—houses,
machines are nothing—I see them not,
I see but you, O warlike pennant! O banner so broad, with
stripes, I sing you only,
Flapping up there in the wind.

RISE, O DAYS, FROM YOUR FATHOMLESS DEEPS

I

Rise, O days, from your fathomless deeps, till you loftier, fiercer
 sweep,
 Long for my soul hungering gymnastic I devour'd what the earth
 gave me,
 Long I roam'd the woods of the north, long I watch'd Niagara
 pouring,
 I travell'd the prairies over and slept on their breast, I cross'd the
 Nevadas, I cross'd the plateaus,
 I ascended the towering rocks along the Pacific, I sail'd out to
 sea,
 I sail'd through the storm, I was refresh'd by the storm,
 I watch'd with joy the threatening maws of the waves,
 I mark'd the white combs where they career'd so high, curling
 over,
 I heard the wind piping, I saw the black clouds,
 Saw from below what arose and mounted (O superb! O wild as
 my heart, and powerful!),
 Heard the continuous thunder as it bellow'd after the lightning,
 Noted the slender and jagged threads of lightning as sudden and
 fast amid the din they chased each other across the sky;
 These, and such as these, I, elate, saw—saw with wonder, yet
 pensive and masterful,
 All the menacing might of the globe uprisen around me,
 Yet there with my soul I fed, I fed content, supercilious.

2

'Twas well, O soul—'twas a good preparation you gave me,
 Now we advance our latent and ampler hunger to fill,
 Now we go forth to receive what the earth and the sea never
 gave us,
 Not through the mighty woods we go, but through the mightier
 cities,
 Something for us is pouring now more than Niagara pouring,
 Torrents of men (sources and rills of the North-west, are you
 indeed inexhaustible?),
 What, to pavements and homesteads here, what were those
 storms of the mountains and sea?
 What, to passions I witness around me to-day? was the sea risen?

Was the wind piping the pipe of death under the black clouds?
 Lo! from deeps more unfathomable, something more deadly and
 savage,
 Manhattan rising, advancing with menacing front—Cincinnati,
 Chicago, unchain'd;
 What was that swell I saw on the ocean? behold what comes
 here,
 How it climbs with daring feet and hands—how it dashes!
 How the true thunder bellows after the lightning—how bright
 the flashes of lightning!
 How Democracy with desperate vengeful port strides on, shown
 through the dark by those flashes of lightning!
 (Yet a mournful wail and low sob I fancied I heard through the
 dark,
 In a lull of the deafening confusion.)

3

Thunder on! stride on, Democracy! strike with vengeful stroke!
 And do you rise higher than ever yet, O days, O cities!
 Crash heavier, heavier yet, O storms! you have done me good,
 My soul prepared in the mountains absorbs your immortal strong
 nutriment,
 Long had I walk'd my cities, my country roads through farms,
 only half satisfied,
 One doubt nauseous undulating like a snake, crawl'd on the
 ground before me,
 Continually preceding my steps, turning upon me oft, ironically
 hissing low;
 The cities I loved so well I abandon'd and left, I sped to the
 certainties suitable to me,
 Hungering, hungering, hungering, for primal energies and
 Nature's dauntlessness,
 I refresh'd myself with it only, I could relish it only,
 I waited the bursting forth of the pent fire—on the water and air
 I waited long;
 But now I no longer wait, I am fully satisfied, I am gluttoned,
 I have witness'd the true lightning, I have witness'd my cities
 electric,
 I have lived to behold man burst forth and warlike America rise,
 Hence I will seek no more the food of the northern solitary
 wilds,
 No more, the mountains roam or sail the stormy sea.

VIRGINIA—THE WEST

THE noble sire fallen on evil days,
I saw with hand uplifted, menacing, brandishing,
(Memories of old in abeyance, love and faith in abeyance),
The insane knife toward the Mother of All.

The noble son on sinewy feet advancing,
I saw, out of the land of prairies, land of Ohio's waters and of
• Indiana,
To the rescue the stalwart giant hurry his plenteous offspring,
Drest in blue, bearing their trusty rifles on their shoulders.

Then the Mother of All with calm voice speaking,
As to you Rebellious (I seemed to hear her say), why strive
against me, and why seek my life?
When you yourself for ever provide to defend me?
For you provided me Washington—and now these also.

CITY OF SHIPS

City of ships!
(O the black ships! O the fierce ships!
O the beautiful sharp-bow'd steamships and sail-ships!)
City of the world! (for all races are here,
All the lands of the earth make contributions here);
City of the sea! city of hurried and glittering tides!
City whose gleeful tides continually rush or recede, whirling in
and out with eddies and foam!
City of wharves and stores—city of tall façades of marble and
iron!
Proud and passionate city—mettlesome, mad, extravagant city!
Spring up, O city—not for peace alone, but be indeed yourself,
warlike!
Fear not—submit to no models but your own, O city!
Behold me—incarnate me as I have incarnated you!
I have rejected nothing you offer'd me—whom you adopted I
have adopted,
Good or bad I never question you—I love all—I do not condemn
anything,
I chant and celebrate all that is yours—yet peace no more,
In peace I chanted peace, but now the drum of war is mine,
War, red war is my song through your streets, O city!

THE CENTENARIAN'S STORY

Volunteer of 1861-2 (at Washington Park, Brooklyn, assisting the Centenarian)

Give me your hand, old Revolutionary,
The hill-top is nigh, but a few steps (make room, gentlemen),
Up the path you have follow'd me well, spite of your hundred
and extra years,
You can walk, old man, though your eyes are almost done,
Your faculties serve you, and presently I must have them serve
me.

Rest, while I tell what the crowd around us means,
On the plain below recruits are drilling and exercising,
There is the camp, one regiment departs to-morrow,
Do you hear the officers giving their orders?
Do you hear the clank of the muskets?

Why, what comes over you now, old man?
Why do you tremble and clutch my hand so convulsively?
The troops are but drilling, they are yet surrounded with smiles,
Around them at hand the well-drest friends and the women,
While splendid and warm the afternoon sun shines down,
Green the midsummer verdure and fresh blows the dallying
breeze,
O'er proud and peaceful cities and arm of the sea between.

But drill and parade are over, they march back to quarters,
Only hear that approval of hands! hear what a clapping!

As wending the crowds now part and disperse—but we, old man,
Not for nothing have I brought you hither—we must remain,
You to speak in your turn, and I to listen and tell.

The Centenarian

When I clutched your hand it was not with terror,
But suddenly pouring about me here on every side,
And below there where the boys were drilling, and up the slopes
they ran,
And where tents are pitch'd, and wherever you see south and
south-east and south-west,

Over hill, across lowlands, and in the skirts of woods,
And along the shores, in mire (now fill'd over) came again and
suddenly raged,
As eighty-five years a-gone no mere parade received with
applause of friends,
But a battle which I took part in myself—aye, long ago as it is,
I took part in it,
Walking then this hill-top, this same ground.

Aye, this is the ground,
My blind eyes even as I speak behold it re-peopled from graves,
The years recede, pavements and stately houses disappear,
Rude forts appear again, the old hoop'd guns are mounted,
I see the lines of rais'd earth stretching from river to bay,
I mark the vista of waters, I mark the uplands and slopes;
Here we lay encamp'd, it was this time in summer also.

As I talk I remember all, I remember the Declaration,
It was read here, the whole army paraded; it was read to us here,
By his staff surrounded the General stood in the middle, he held
up his unsheath'd sword,
It glitter'd in the sun in full sight of the army.

'Twas a bold act then—the English war-ships had just arrived,
We could watch down the lower bay where they lay at anchor,
And the transports swarming with soldiers.

A few days more and they landed, and then the battle.

Twenty thousand were brought against us,
A veteran force furnish'd with good artillery.

I tell not now the whole of the battle,
But one brigade early in the forenoon order'd forward to engage
the red-coats,
Of that brigade I tell, and how steadily it march'd,
And how long and well it stood confronting death.

Who do you think that was marching steadily sternly confronting
death?

It was the brigade of the youngest men, two thousand strong,
Rais'd in Virginia and Maryland, and most of them known
personally to the General.

Jauntily forward they went with quick step toward Gowanus'
 waters,
 Till of a sudden unlook'd for by defiles through the woods, gain'd
 at night,
 The British advancing, rounding in from the east, fiercely playing
 their guns,
 That brigade of the youngest was cut off and at the enemy's
 mercy.

The General watch'd them from this hill,
 They made repeated desperate attempts to burst their environ-
 ment,
 Then drew close together, very compact, their flag flying in the
 middle,
 But O from the hills how the cannon were thinning and thinning
 them!

It sickens me yet, that slaughter!
 I saw the moisture gather in drops on the face of the General,
 I saw how he wrung his hands in anguish

Meanwhile the British manœuvr'd to draw us out for a pitch'd
 battle,
 But we dared not trust the chances of a pitch'd battle.

We fought the fight in detachments,
 Sallying forth we fought at several points, but in each the luck
 was against us,
 Our foe advancing, steadily getting the best of it, push'd us back
 to the works on this hill,
 Till we turn'd menacing here, and then he left us.

That was the going out of the brigade of the youngest men, two
 thousand strong,
 Few return'd, nearly all remain in Brooklyn.

That and here my General's first battle,
 No women looking on nor sunshine to bask in, it did not conclude
 with applause,
 Nobody clapp'd hands here then.

But in darkness, in mist on the ground under a chill rain,
 Wearied that night we lay foil'd and sullen,

While scornfully laugh'd many an arrogant lord off against us
 encamp'd,
 Quite within hearing, feasting, clinking wine-glasses together
 over their victory.

So dull and damp and another day,
 But the night of that, mist lifting, rain ceasing,
 Silent as a ghost while they thought they were sure of him, my
 General retreated.

I saw him at the river-side,
 Down by the ferry lit by torches, hastening the embarkation;
 My General waited till the soldiers and wounded were all pass'd
 over,
 And then (it was just ere sunrise), these eyes rested on him for
 the last time.

Every one else seem'd fill'd with gloom,
 Many no doubt thought of capitulation.

But when my General pass'd me,
 As he stood in his boat and look'd toward the coming sun,
 I saw something different from capitulation.

Terminus

Enough, the Centenarian's story ends,
 The two, the past and present, have interchanged,
 I myself as connector, as chansonnier of a great future, am now
 speaking.

And is this the ground Washington trod?
 And these waters I listlessly daily cross, are these the waters he
 cross'd,
 As resolute in defeat as other generals in their proudest triumphs?

I must copy the story, and send it eastward and westward,
 I must preserve that look as it beam'd on you rivers of Brooklyn.

See—as the annual round returns the phantoms return,
 It is the 27th of August and the British have landed,
 The battle begins and goes against us, behold through the smoke
 Washington's face,

The brigade of Virginia and Maryland have march'd forth to
 intercept the enemy,
 They are cut off, murderous artillery from the hills plays upon
 them,
 Rank after rank falls, while over them silently droops the flag,
 Baptized that day in many a young man's bloody wounds,
 In death, defeat, and sisters', mothers' tears.

Ah, hills and slopes of Brooklyn! I perceive you are more
 valuable than your owners supposed;
 In the midst of you stands an encampment very old,
 Stands for ever the camp of that dead brigade.

CAVALRY CROSSING A FORD

A LINE in long array where they wind betwixt green islands,
 They take a serpentine course, their arms flash in the sun—hark
 to the musical clank,
 Behold the silvery river, in it the splashing horses loitering stop
 to drink,
 Behold the brown-faced men, each group, each person a picture,
 the negligent rest on the saddles,
 Some emerge on the opposite bank, others are just entering the
 ford—while,
 Scarlet and blue and snowy white,
 The guidon flags flutter gaily in the wind.

BIVOUAC ON A MOUNTAIN SIDE

I SEE before me now a travelling army halting,
 Below a fertile valley spread, with barns and the orchards of
 summer,
 Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain, abrupt, in places rising
 high,
 Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars, with tall shapes dingly
 seen,
 The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and far, some away up
 on the mountain,
 The shadowy forms of men and horses, looming, large-sized,
 flickering,
 And over all the sky—the sky! far, far out of reach, studded,
 breaking out, the eternal stars.

AN ARMY CORPS ON THE MARCH

With its cloud of skirmishers in advance,
With now the sound of a single shot snapping like a whip, and
now an irregular volley,
The swarming ranks press on and on, the dense brigades press
on,
Glittering dimly, toiling under the sun—the dust-cover'd men,
In columns rise and fall to the undulations of the ground,
With artillery interspers'd—the wheels rumble, the horses sweat,
As the army corps advances.

BY THE BIVOUAC'S FITFUL FLAME

By the bivouac's fitful flame,
A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and slow—
but first I note,
The tents of the sleeping army, the fields' and woods' dim
outline,
The darkness lit by spots of kindled fire, the silence,
Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving,
The shrubs and trees (as I lift my eyes they seem to be stealthily
watching me),
While wind in procession thoughts, O tender and wondrous
thoughts,
Of life and death, of home and the past and loved, and of those
that are far away;
A solemn and slow procession there as I sit on the ground,
By the bivouac's fitful flame.

COME UP FROM THE FIELDS, FATHER

Come up from the fields, father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door, mother, here's a letter from thy dear
son.

Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in the
moderate wind,

Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the trellis'd
vines,

(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?

Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)

Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the rain, and
with wondrous clouds,

Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm prospers
well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,

But now from the fields come, father, come at the daughter's call,

And come to the entry, mother, to the front door come right away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps
trembling,

She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,

O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,

O a strange hand writes for our dear son, O stricken mother's
soul!

All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she catches the
main words only,

Sentences broken, *gunshot wound in the breast, cavalry skirmish,*
taken to hospital,

At present low, but will soon be better.

Ah, now the single figure to me,

Amid all teenning and wealthy Ohio with all its cities and farms,

Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very faint,

By the jamb of a door leans.

Grieve not so, dear mother (the just-grown daughter speaks
through her sobs,

The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd),

See, dearest mother, the letter says I'm well soon be better.

Alas, poor boy, he will never be better (nor maybe needs to be
better, that brave and simple soul),

While they stand at home at the door he is dead already,

The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,

She with thin form presently drest in black,

By day her meals untouch'd, then at night fitfully sleeping,
 often waking,
 In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep longing,
 O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life escape
 and withdraw,
 To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

VIGIL STRANGE I KEPT ON THE FIELD ONE NIGHT

VIGIL strange I kept on the field one night;
 When you, my son and my comrade, dropt at my side that day,
 One look I but gave which your dear eyes return'd with a look
 I shall never forget,
 One touch of your hand to mine, O boy, reach'd up as you lay
 on the ground,
 Then onward I sped in the battle, the even-contested battle,
 Till late in the night reliev'd to the place at last again I made
 my way,
 Found you in death so cold, dear comrade, found your body, son
 of responding kisses (never again on earth responding),
 Bared your face in the starlight, curious the scene, cool blew
 the moderate night-wind,
 Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around 'me the
 battle-field spreading,
 Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet there in the fragrant silent night,
 But not a tear fell, not even a long-drawn sigh, long, long I gazed,
 Then on the earth partially reclining sat by your side leaning
 my chin in my hands,
 Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with you,
 dearest comrade—not a tear, not a word,
 Vigil of silence, love and death, vigil for you, my son and my
 soldier,
 As onward silently stars aloft, eastward new ones upward stole,
 Vigil final for you, brave boy (I could not save you, swift was
 your death,
 I faithfully loved you and cared for you living, I think we shall
 surely meet again),
 Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed just as the dawn
 appear'd,
 My comrade I wrapt in his blanket, envelop'd well his form,
 Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head and
 carefully under feet,

And there and then and bathed by the rising run, my son in his
grave, in his rude-dug grave I deposited,
Ending my vigil strange with that, vigil of night and battle-
field dim,
Vigil for boy of responding kisses (never again on earth re-
sponding),
Vigil for comrade swiftly slain, vigil I never forget, how as day
brighten'd,
I rose from the chill ground and folded my soldier well in his
blanket,
And buried him where he fell.

A MARCH IN THE RANKS HARD-PREST, AND THE ROAD UNKNOWN

A MARCH in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown,
A route through a heavy wood, with muffled steps in the darkness,
Our army foiled with loss severe, and the sullen remnant re-
treating,
Till after midnight glimmer upon us the lights of a dim-lighted
building,
We come to an open space in the woods, and halt by the dim-
lighted building,
'Tis a large old church at the crossing roads, now an'impromptu
hospital,
Entering but for a minute I see a sight beyond all the pictures
and poems ever made,
Shadows of deepest, deepest black, just lit by moving candles
and lamps,
And by one great pitchy torch stationary with wild red flame
and clouds of smoke,
By these, crowds, groups of forms vaguely I see on the floor,
some in the pews laid down,
At my feet more distinctly a soldier, a mere lad, in danger of
bleeding to death (he is shot in the abdomen),
I stanch the blood temporarily (the youngster's face is white as
a lily),
Then before I depart I sweep my eyes o'er the scene fain to
absorb it all,
Faces, varieties, postures beyond description, most in obscurity,
some of them dead,

Surgeons operating, attendants holding lights, the smell of ether,
 the odour of blood,
 The crowd, O the crowd of the bloody forms, the road outside
 also fill'd,
 Some on the bare ground, some on planks or stretchers, some
 in the death-spasm sweating,
 An occasional scream or cry, the doctor's shouted orders or
 calls,
 The glisten of the little steel instruments catching the glint of
 the torches,
 These I resume as I chant, I see again the forms, I smell the
 odour,
 Then hear outside the orders given, *Fall in, my men, fall in ;*
 But first I bend to the dying lad, his eyes open, a half-smile
 gives he me,
 Then the eyes close, calmly close, and I speed forth to the
 darkness,
 Resuming, marching, ever in darkness marching, on in the
 ranks,
 The unknown road still marching.

A SIGHT IN CAMP IN THE DAYBREAK GREY AND DIM

A sight in camp in the daybreak grey and dim,
 As from my tent I emerge so early sleepless,
 As slow I walk in the cool fresh air the path near by the hospital
 tent,
 Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out there un-
 tended lying,
 Over each the blanket spread, ample brownish woollen blanket,
 Grey and heavy blanket, folding, covering all.
 Curious I halt and silent stand,
 Then with light fingers I from the face of the nearest the first
 just lift the blanket;
 Who are you elderly man so gaunt and grim, with well-grey'd
 hair, and flesh all sunken about the eyes?
 Who are you, my dear comrade?
 Then to the second I step—and who are you, my child and
 darling?
 Who are you sweet boy with cheeks yet blooming?

Then to the third—a face nor child nor old, very calm, as of
 beautiful yellow-white ivory;
 Young man, I think I know you—I think this face is the face
 of the Christ himself,
 Dead and divine and brother of all, and here again he lies.

AS TOILSOME I WANDER'D VIRGINIA'S WOODS

As toilsome I wander'd Virginia's woods,
 To the music of rustling leaves kick'd by my feet (for 'twas
 autumn),
 I mark'd at the foot of a tree the grave of a soldier;
 Mortally wounded he and buried on the retreat (easily all could
 I understand),
 The halt of a mid-day hour, when up! no time to lose--yet this
 sign left,
 On a tablet scrawl'd and nail'd on the tree by the grave,
Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.

Long, long I muse, then on my way go wandering,
 Many a changeful season to follow, and many a scene of life.
 Yet at times through changeful season and scene, abrupt, alone,
 or in the crowded street,
 Comes before me the unknown soldier's grave, comes the inscription
 rude in Virginia's woods,
Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.

NOT THE PILOT

Nor the pilot has charged himself to bring his ship into port,
 though beaten back and many times baffled;
 Not the pathfinder penetrating inland weary and long,
 By deserts parch'd, snows chill'd, rivers wet, perseveres till he
 reaches his destination,
 More than I have charged myself, heeded or unheeded, to com-
 pose a march for these States,
 For a battle-call, rousing to arms if need be, years, centuries hence.

YEAR THAT TREMBLED AND REEL'D BENEATH ME

YEAR that trembled and reel'd beneath me!
 Your summer wind was warm enough, yet the air I breathed
 froze me,

A thick gloom fell through the sunshine and darken'd me,
 Must I change my triumphant songs? said I to myself,
 Must I indeed learn to chant the cold dirges of the battle?
 And sullen hymns of defeat?

THE WOUND-DRESSER

I

•An old man bending I come among new faces,
 Years looking backward resuming in answer to children,
 Come tell us, old man, as from young men and maidens that love
 me,
 (Arous'd and angry, I'd thought to beat the alarm, and urge
 relentless war,
 But soon my fingers fail'd me, my face droop'd and I resign'd
 myself,
 To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or silently watch the
 dead;)
 Years hence of these scenes, of these furious passions, these
 chances,
 Of unsurpass'd heroes (was one side so brave? the other was
 equally brave;)
 Now be witness again, paint the mightiest armies of earth,
 Of those armies so rapid, so wondrous, what saw you to tell us?
 What stays with you latest and deepest? of curious panics,
 Of hard-fought engagements or sieges tremendous what deepest
 remains?

2

O maidens and young men I love and that love me,
 What you ask of my days those the strangest and sudden your
 talking recalls,
 Soldier alert I arrive after a long march cover'd with sweat and
 dust,
 In the nick of time I come, plunge in the fight, loudly shout in
 the rush of successful charge,
 Enter the captur'd works—yet lo, like a swift-running river they
 fade,
 Pass and are gone they fade—I dwell not on soldiers' perils or
 soldiers' joys,
 (Both I remember well—many the hardships, few the joys, yet I
 was content).

But in silence, in dreams' projections,
 While the world of gain and appearance and mirth goes on,
 So soon what is over forgotten, and waves wash the imprints off
 the sand,
 With hinged knees returning I enter the doors (while for you up
 there,
 Whoever you are, follow without noise and be of strong heart).

Bearing the bandages, water and sponge,
 Straight and swift to my wounded I go,
 Where they lie on the ground after the battle brought in,
 Where their priceless blood reddens the grass, the ground,
 Or to the rows of the hospital tent, or under the roof'd hospital,
 To the long rows of cots up and down each side I return,
 To each and all one after another I draw near, not one do I miss,
 An attendant follows holding a tray, he carries a refuse pail,
 Soon to be fill'd with clotted rags and blood, emptied, and fill'd
 again.

I onward go, I stop,
 With hinged knees and steady hand to dress wounds,
 I am firm with each, the pangs are sharp yet unavoidable,
 One turns to me his appealing eyes—poor boy! I never knew
 you,
 Yet I think I could not refuse this moment to die for you, if that
 would save you.

3

On, on I go (open doors of time! open hospital doors!)
 The crush'd head I dress (poor crazed hand tear not the bandage
 away),
 The neck of the cavalry-man with the bullet through and through
 I examine,
 Hard the breathing rattles, quite glazed already the eye, yet life
 struggles hard,
 (Come sweet death! be persuaded O beautiful death!
 In mercy come quickly).

From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,
 I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the matter
 and blood,
 Back on his pillow the soldier bends with curv'd neck and side-
 falling head,

His eyes are closed, his face is pale, he dares not look on the
bloody stump,
And has not yet look'd on it.

I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep,
But a day or two more, for see the frame all wasted and sinking,
And the yellow-blue countenance see.

I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot with the bullet-wound,
Cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene, so sickening,
so offensive,
While the attendant stands behind aside me holding the tray
and pail.

I am faithful, I do not give out,
The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound in the abdomen,
These and more I dress with impassive hand (yet deep in my
breast a fire, a burning flame).

4

Thus in silence in dreams' projections,
Returning, resuming, I thread my way through the hospitals,
The hurt and wounded I pacify with soothing hand,
I sit by the restless all the dark night, some are so young,
Some suffer so much, I recall the experience sweet and sad,
(Many a soldier's loving arms about this neck have cross'd and
rested,
Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips).

LONG, TOO LONG, AMERICA

Long, too long, America,
Travelling roads all even and peaceful you learn'd from joys and
prosperity only,
But now, ah now, to learn from crises of anguish, advancing,
grappling with direst fate and recoiling not,
And now to conceive and show to the world what your children
en-masse really are,
(For who except myself has yet conceiv'd what your children
en-masse really are?)

GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

I

Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling,
 Give me juicy, autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,
 Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows,
 Give me an arbour, give me the trellis'd grape,
 Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals
 teaching content,
 Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high plateaus west of the
 Mississippi, and I looking up at the stars,
 Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers where I
 can walk undisturb'd,
 Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd woman of whom I should
 never tire,
 Give me a perfect child, give me away aside from the noise of the
 world a rural domestic life,
 Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my
 own ears only,
 Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me again O Nature your
 primal sanities!

These demanding to have them (tired with ceaseless excitement,
 and rack'd by the war-strife),
 These to procure incessantly asking, rising in cries from my heart,
 While yet incessantly asking still I adhere to my city,
 Day upon day and year upon year, O city, walking your streets,
 Where you hold me enchain'd a certain time refusing to give me
 up,
 Yet giving to make me gluttled, enrich'd of soul, you give me
 forever faces;
 (O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing my cries,
 I see my own soul trampling down what it ask'd for).

2

Keep your splendid silent sun,
 Keep your woods, O Nature, and the quiet places by the woods,
 Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your corn-fields and
 orchards,
 Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields where the Ninth-month
 bees hum;

Give me faces and streets—give me these phantoms incessant
and endless along the trottoirs!
Give me interminable eyes—give me women—give me all trades
and lovers by the thousand!
Let me see new ones every day—let me hold new ones by the
hand every day!
Give me such shows—give me the streets of Manhattan!
Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching—give me the
sound of the trumpets and drums!
(The soldiers in companies or regiments—some starting away,
flush'd and reckless,
Some, their time up, returning with thinn'd ranks, young, yet
very old, worn, marching, noticing nothing;)
Give me the shores and wharves heavy-fringed with black
ships!
O such for me! O an intense life, full to repletion and
varied!
The life of the theatre, bar-room, huge hotel, for me!
The saloon of the steamer! the crowded excursion for me! the
torchlight procession!
The dense brigade bound for the war, with high piled military
wagons following;
People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions,
pageants,
Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs, with beating
drums as now,
The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of muskets
(even the sight of the wounded),
Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus!
Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.

DIRGE FOR TWO VETERANS

THE last sunbeam
Lightly falls from the finish'd Sabbath,
On the pavement here, and there beyond it is looking,
Down a new-made double grave.

Lo, the moon ascending,
Up from the east the silvery round moon,
Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon,
Immense and silent moon.

I see a sad procession,
And I hear the sound of coming full-key'd bugles,
All the channels of the city streets they're flooding,
As with voices and with tears.

I hear the great drums pounding,
And the small drums steady whirring,
And every blow of the great convulsive drums
Strikes me through and through.

For the son is brought with the father,
(In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell,
Two veterans son and father dropt together,
And the double grave awaits them).

Now nearer blow the bugles,
And the drums strike more convulsive,
And the daylight o'er the pavement quite has faded,
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.

In the eastern sky up-buoying,
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumin'd,
('Tis some mother's large transparent face,
In heaven brighter glowing).

O strong dead-march, you please me!
O moon immense with your silvery face, you soothe me!
O my soldiers twain! O my veterans passing to burial!
What I have I also give you.

The moon gives you light,
And the bugles and the drums give you music,
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
My heart gives you love.

OVER THE CARNAGE ROSE PROPHEPIC A VOICE

OVER the carnage rose prophepic a voice,
Be not dishearten'd, affection shall solve the problems of freedom
yet,
Those who love each other shall become invincible,
They shall yet make Columbia victorious.

Sons of the Mother of All, you shall yet be victorious,
 You shall yet laugh to scorn the attacks of all the remainder of
 the earth.

No danger shall balk Columbia's lovers,
 If need be a thousand shall sternly immolate themselves for one.

One from Massachusetts shall be a Missourian's comrade,
 From Maine and from hot Carolina, and another an Oregonese,
 * shall be friends triune,
 More precious to each other than all the riches of the earth.

To Michigan, Florida perfumes shall tenderly come,
 Not the perfumes of flowers, but sweeter, and waited beyond
 death.

It shall be customary in the houses and streets to see manly
 affection,
 The most dauntless and rude shall touch face to face lightly,
 The dependence of Liberty shall be lovers,
 The continuance of Equality shall be comrades.

These shall tie you and band you stronger than hoops of iron,
 I, ecstatic, O partners! O lands! with the love of lovers tie you,

(Were you looking to be held together by lawyers?
 Or by an agreement on a paper? or by arms?
 Nay, nor the world, nor any living thing, will so cohere.)

I SAW OLD GENERAL AT BAY

I saw old General at bay,
 (Old as he was, his grey eyes yet shone out in battle like stars),
 His small force was now completely hemmed in, in his works,
 He call'd for volunteers to run the enemy's lines, a desperate
 emergency,
 I saw a hundred and more step forth from the ranks, but two or
 three were selected,
 I saw them receive their orders aside, they listen'd with care, the
 adjutant was very grave,
 I saw them depart with cheerfulness, freely risking their lives.

THE ARTILLERYMAN'S VISION

WHILE my wife at my side lies slumbering, and the wars are over
 long,
 And my head 'on the pillow rests at home, and the vacant mid-
 night passes,
 And through the stillness, through the dark, I hear, just hear,
 the breath of my infant,
 There in the room as I wake from sleep this vision presses upon
 me;
 The engagement opens there and then in fantasy unreal,
 The skirmishers begin, they crawl cautiously ahead, I hear the
 irregular snap! snap!
 I hear the sound of the different missiles, the short *t-h-t! t-h-t!*
 of the rifle-balls,
 I see the shells exploding leaving small white clouds, I hear the
 great shells shrieking as they pass,
 The grape like the hum and whirr of wind through the trees
 (tumultuous now the contest rages),
 All the scenes at the batteries rise in detail before me again,
 The crashing and smoking, the pride of the men in their pieces.
 The chief gunner ranges and sights his piece and selects a fuse of
 the right time,
 After firing I see him lean aside and look eagerly off to note the
 effect;
 Elsewhere I hear the cry of a regiment charging (the young
 colonel leads himself this time with brandish'd sword),
 I see the gaps cut by the enemy's volleys (quickly fill'd up, no
 delay),
 I breathe the suffocating smoke, then the flat clouds hover low
 concealing all;
 Now a strange lull for a few seconds, not a shot fired on either
 side,
 Then resumed the chaos louder than ever, with eager calls and
 orders of officers,
 While from some distant part of the field the wind wafts to my
 ears a shout of applause (some special success),
 And ever the sound of the cannon far or near (rousing even in
 dreams a'devilish exultation and all the old mad joy in the
 depths of my soul),
 And ever the hastening of infantry shifting positions, batteries,
 cavalry, moving hither and thither,

(The falling, dying, I heed not, the wounded dripping and red I
 heed not, some to the rear are hobbling),
 Grime, heat, rush, aide-de-camps galloping by or on a full run,
 With the patter of small arms, the warning s-s-t of the rifles
 (these in my vision I hear or see),
 And bombs bursting in air, and at night the varied colour'd
 rockets.

• ETHIOPIA SALUTING THE COLOURS

Who are you, dusky woman, so ancient hardly human,
 With your woolly-white and turban'd head, and bare bonv feet?
 Why rising by the roadside here, do you the colours greet?

("Tis while our army lines Carolina's sands and pines,
 Forth from thy hovel door thou, Ethiopia, com'st to me,
 As under doughty Sherman I march toward the sea.)

*Me master years a hundred since from my parents sunder'd,
 A little child, they caught me as the savage beast is caught,
 Then hither me across the sea the cruel slaver brought.*

No further does she say, but lingering all the day,
 Her high-borne turban'd head she wags, and rolls her darkling eye,
 And courtesies to the regiments, the guidons moving by.

What is it, fateful woman, so blear, hardly human?
 Why wag your head with turban bound, yellow, red, and green?
 Are the things so strange and marvellous you see or have seen?

NOT YOUTH PERTAINS TO ME

Nor youth pertains to me,
 Nor delicatess, I cannot beguile the time with talk,
 Awkward in the parlour, neither a dancer nor elegant,
 In the learn'd coterie sitting constrain'd and still, for learning
 inures not to me,
 Beauty, knowledge, inure not to me—yet there are two or three
 things inure to me,
 I have nourish'd the wounded and sooth'd many a dying soldier
 And at intervals waiting or in the midst of camp,
 Composed these songs.

RACE OF VETERANS

RACE of veterans—race of victors!
 Race of the soil, ready for conflict—race of the conquering march!
 (No more credulity's race, abiding-temper'd race),
 Race henceforth owning no law but the law of itself,
 Race of passion and the storm.

WORLD, TAKE GOOD NOTICE

WORLD, take good notice, silver stars fading,
 Milky hue ript, weft of white detaching,
 Coals thirty-eight, baleful and burning,
 Scarlet, significant, hands off warning,
 Now and henceforth flaunt from these shores.

O TAN-FACED PRAIRIE-BOY

O TAN-FACED prairie-boy,
 Before you came to camp came many a welcome gift,
 Praises and presents came and nourishing food, till at last among
 the recruits,
 You came, taciturn, with nothing to give—we but look'd on each
 other,
 When lo! more than all the gifts of the world you gave me.

LOOK DOWN, FAIR MOON

LOOK down, fair moon, and bathe this scene,
 Pour softly down night's numbus floods on faces ghastly, swollen,
 purple,
 On the dead on their backs with arms toss'd wide,
 Pour down your unstinted nimbus, sacred moon.

RECONCILIATION

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky,
 Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be
 utterly lost,
 That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly
 wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;

For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
 I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—I draw near,
 Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white line in the
 coffin.

HOW SOLEMN AS ONE BY ONE

(Washington City, 1865)

How solemn as one by one,
 As the ranks returning worn and sweaty, as the men file by
 where I stand,
 As the faces the masks appear, as I glance at the faces studying
 the masks
 (As I glance upward out of this page studying you, dear friend,
 whoever you are),
 How solemn the thought of my whispering soul to each in the
 ranks, and to you,
 I see behind each mask that wonder a kindred soul,
 O the bullet could never kill what you really are, dear friend,
 Nor the bayonet stab what you really are;
 The soul yourself I see, great as any, good as the best,
 Waiting secure and content, which the bullet could never kill,
 Nor the bayonet stab, O friend.

AS I LAY WITH MY HEAD IN YOUR LAP, CAMERADO

As I lay with my head in your lap, camerado,
 The confession I made I resume, what I said to you and the open
 air I resume,
 I know I am restless and make others so,
 I know my words are weapons full of danger, full of death,
 For I confront peace, security, and all the settled laws, to un-
 settle them,
 I am more resolute because all have denied me than I could ever
 have been had all accepted me,
 I heed not and have never heeded either experience, cautions,
 majorities, nor ridicule,
 And the threat of what is call'd hell is little or nothing to me,
 And the lure of what is call'd heaven is little or nothing to me;
 Dear camerado! I confess I have urged you onward with me, and
 still urge you, without the least idea what is our destination,
 Or whether we shall be victorious, or utterly quell'd and
 defeated.

DELICATE CLUSTER

DELICATE cluster! flag of teeming life!
 Covering all my lands—all my seashores lining!
 Flag of death! (how I watch'd you through the smoke of battle
 pressing!)
 How I heard you flap and rustle, cloth defiant!)
 Flag cerulean—sunny flag, with the orbs of night dappled!
 Ah, my silvery beauty—ah, my woolly white and crimson!
 Ah, to sing the song of you, my matron mighty!
 My sacred one, my mother.

TO A CERTAIN CIVILIAN

DID you ask dulcet rhymes from me?
 Did you seek the civilian's peaceful and languishing rhymes?
 Did you find what I sang erewhile so hard to follow?
 Why I was not singing erewhile for you to follow, to understand
 —nor am I now;
 (I have been born of the same as the war was born,
 The drum-corps' rattle is ever to me sweet music, I love well the
 martial dirge,
 With slow wail and convulsive throb leading the officer's
 funeral;)
 What to such as you anyhow such a poet as I? therefore leave
 my works,
 And go lull yourself with what you can understand, and with
 piano-tunes,
 For I lull nobody, and you will never understand me.

LO, VICTRESS ON THE PEAKS

Lo, Victress on the peaks,
 Where thou with mighty brow regarding the world,
 (The world, O Libertad, that vainly conspired against thee),
 Out of its countless beleaguering toils, after thwarting them all,
 Dominant, with the dazzling sun around thee,
 Flauntest now unharm'd in immortal soundness and bloom—
 lo, in these hours supreme,

No poem proud, I chanting bring to thee, nor mastery's rapturous verse,
But a cluster containing night's darkness and blood-clipping wounds,
And psalms of the dead.

SPIRIT WHOSE WORK IS DONE

(Washington City, 1865)

SPIRIT whose work is done—spirit of dreadful hours!
Ere departing fade from my eyes your forests of bayonets;
Spirit of gloomiest fears and doubts (yet onward ever unfaltering pressing),
Spirit of many a solemn day and many a savage scene—electric spirit,
That with muttering voice through the war now closed, like a tireless phantom flitted,
Rousing the land with breath of flame, while you beat and beat the drum,
Now as the sound of the drum, hollow and harsh to the last, reverberates round me,
As your ranks, your immortal ranks, return, return from the battles,
As the muskets of the young men yet lean over their shoulders,
As I look on the bayonets bristling over their shoulders,
As those slanted bayonets, whole forests of them appearing in the distance, approach and pass on, returning homeward,
Moving with steady motion, swaying to and fro to the right and left,
Evenly lightly rising and falling while the steps keep time;
Spirit of hours I knew, all hectic red one day, but pale as death next day,
Touch my mouth ere you depart, press my lips close,
Leave me your pulses of rage—bequeath them to me—fill me with currents convulsive,
Let them scorch and blister out of my chants when you are gone,
Let them identify you to the future in these songs.

ADIEU TO A SOLDIER

ADIEU, O soldier,
You of the rude campaigning (which we shared),
The rapid march, the life of the camp,

The hot contention of opposing fronts, the long manœuvre,
 Red battles with their slaughter, the stimulus, the strong terrific
 game,
 Spell of all brave and manly hearts, the trains of time through
 you and like of you all fill'd,
 With war and war's expression.

Adieu, dear comrade,
 Your mission is fulfill'd—but I, more warlike,
 Myself and this contentious soul of mine,
 Still on our own campaigning bound,
 Through untried roads with ambushes, opponents lined,
 Through many a sharp defeat and many a crisis, often baffled,
 Here marching, ever marching on, a war fight out—aye here,
 To fiercer, weightier battles give expression.

TURN, O LIBERTAD

TURN, O Libertad, for the war is over,
 From it and all henceforth expanding, doubting no more,
 resolute, sweeping the world,
 Turn from lands retrospective recording proofs of the past,
 From the singers that sing the trailing glories of the past,
 From the chants of the feudal world, the triumphs of kings,
 slavery, caste,
 Turn to the world, the triumphs reserv'd and to come—give up
 that backward world,
 Leave to the singers of hitherto, give them the trailing past,
 But what remains remains for singers for you—wars to come are
 for you,
 (Lo, how the wars of the past have duly inured to you, and the
 wars of the present also inure;)
 Then turn, and be not alarm'd, O Libertad—turn your undying
 face,
 To where the future, greater than all the past,
 Is swiftly, surely preparing for you.

TO THE LEAVEN'D SOIL THEY TROD

To the leaven'd soil they trod calling I sing for the last
 (Forth from my tent emerging for good, loosing, untying the
 tent-ropes),

In the freshness the forenoon air, in the far-stretching circuits
 and vistas again to peace restored,
 To the fiery fields emanative and the endless vistas beyond, to
 the South and the North,
 To the leaven'd soil of the general Western world to attest my
 songs,
 To the Alleghanian hills and the tireless Mississippi,
 To the rocks I calling sing, and all the trees in the woods,
 To the plains of the poems of heroes, to the prairies spreading
 wide,
 To the far-off sea and the unseen winds, and the sane impalpable
 air;
 And responding they answer all (but not in words),
 The average earth, the witness of war and peace, acknowledges
 mutely,
 The prairie draws me close, as the father to bosom broad the son,
 The Northern ice and rain that began me nourish me to the end,
 But the hot sun of the South is to fully ripen my songs.

MEMORIES OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D

1.

WHEN lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

2

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

3

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-
wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of
rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume
strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-colour'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich
green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

4

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the tumults,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life (for well, dear brother, I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die).

5

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets
peep'd from the ground, spotting the grey debris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the
endless grass,
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud
in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

6

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in
black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women
standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the
night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and
the unbared heads,
With the waiting dépôt, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the shout and voices rising
strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the
coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid
these you journey,
With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

7

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,
For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you, O
sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you, O death.)

8

O western orb, sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I
walk'd,
As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after
night,
As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side (while
the other stars all look'd on),
As we wander'd together the solemn night (for something I know
not what kept me from sleep),
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how
full you were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool trans-
parent night,
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the netherward
black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you, sad
orb,
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

9

Sing on there in the swamp,
O singer, bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd me,
The star thy departing comrade holds and detains me.

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
 And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has
 gone?
 And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
 Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till
 there on the prairies meeting,
 These and with these and the breath of my chant,
 I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

II

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
 And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
 To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
 With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the grey smoke
 lucid and bright,
 With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking
 sun, burning, expanding the air,
 With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green
 leaves of the trees prolific,
 In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a
 wind-dapple here and there,
 With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky,
 and shadows,
 And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of
 chimneys,
 And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen
 homeward returning.

12

Lo, body and soul—this land,
 My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying
 tides, and the ships,
 The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light,
 Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
 And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
 The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
 The gentle soft-born measureless light,
 The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,
 The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
 Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

13

Sing on, sing on, you grey-brown bird,
 Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the
 bushes,
 Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on, dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
 Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
 O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
 You only I hear—yet the star holds me (but will soon depart),
 Yet the lilac with mastering odour holds me.

14

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,
 In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and
 the farmers preparing their crops,
 In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and
 forests,
 In the heavenly aerial beauty (after the perturb'd winds and the
 storms),
 Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and
 the voices of children and women,
 The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they
 sail'd,
 And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all
 busy with labour,
 And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with
 its meals and minutia of daily usages,
 And the streets how their throbbings throb'd, and the cities
 pent—lo, then and there,
 Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with
 the rest,

Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the
hands of companions,

I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the
dimness,

To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still,

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
The grey-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

*Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.*

*Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love - but praise I praise I praise I
For the sure-enswinding arms of cool-enfolding death.*

*Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfa-
lteringly.*

*Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death.*

*From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings
for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are
fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.*

*The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice
I know,
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.*

*Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the
prairies wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O death.*

15

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the grey-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes spreading filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

And I saw askant the armies,
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierc'd with missiles
I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and
bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs (and all in silence),
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,

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I saw the débris and débris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
 But I saw they were not as was thought,
 They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
 The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
 And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd,
 And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

16.

Passing the visions, passing the night,
 Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
 Passing the song of the hermit-bird and the tallying song of my
 soul,
 Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering
 song,
 As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling,
 flooding the night,
 Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet
 again bursting with joy,
 Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
 As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
 Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
 I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with
 spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
 From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing
 with thee,
 O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night,

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
 The song, the wondrous chant of the grey-brown bird,
 And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
 With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full
 of woe,
 With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the
 bird,
 Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to
 keep, for the dead I loved so well,
 For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this
 for his dear sake,
 Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
 There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O CAPTAIN! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
 The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
 The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
 While follow'd eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
 But O heart! heart! heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
 Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
 For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores
 a-crowding,
 For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
 Here Captain! dear father!
 This arm beneath your head!
 It is some dream that on the deck,
 You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
 My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
 The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
 From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
 Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
 But I with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

HUSH'D BE THE CAMPS TO-DAY

(May 4, 1865)

HUSH'd be the camps to-day,
 And soldiers, let us drape our war-worn weapons,
 And each, with musing soul retire to celebrate,
 Our dear commander's death.

No more for him life's stormy conflicts,
 Nor victory, nor defeat—no more time's dark events,
 Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky.

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But sing, poet, in our name,
Sing of the love we bore him—because you, dweller in camps,
 know it truly.

As they invault the coffin there,
Sing—as they close the doors of earth upon him—one verse,
For the heavy hearts of soldiers.

THIS DUST WAS ONCE THE MAN

THIS dust was once the man,
Gentle, plain, just, and resolute, under whose cautious hand,
Against the foulest crime in history known in any land or age,
Was saved the Union of these States.

BY BLUE ONTARIO'S SHORE

I

By blue Ontario's shore,
As I mused of these warlike days and of peace return'd, and the
dead that return no more,
A Phantom gigantic, superb, with stern visage accosted me,
Chant me the poem, it said, *that comes from the soul of America,*
chant me the carol of victory,
And strike up the marches of Libertad, marches more powerful yet,
And sing me before you go the song of the throes of Democracy.
(Democracy, the destin'd conqueror, yet treacherous lip-smiles
everywhere,
And death and infidelity at every step.)

2

A Nation announcing itself,
I myself make the only growth by which I can be appreciated,
I reject none, accept all, then reproduce all in my own forms.
A breed whose proof is in time and deeds,
What we are we are, nativity is answer enough to objections,
We wield ourselves as a weapon is wielded,
We are powerful and tremendous in ourselves,
We are executive in ourselves, we are sufficient in the variety of
ourselves,
We are the most beautiful to ourselves and in ourselves,
We stand self-pois'd in the middle, branching thence over the
world,
From Missouri, Nebraska, or Kansas, laughing attacks to scorn.
Nothing is sinful to us outside of ourselves,
Whatever appears, whatever does not appear, we are beautiful
or sinful in ourselves only.
(O Mother—O Sisters dear!
If we are lost, no victor else has destroy'd us,
It is by ourselves we go down to eternal night.)

3

Have you thought there could be but a single supreme?
There can be any number of supremes—one does not counter-
vail another any more than one eyesight countervails
another, or one life countervails another.

All is eligible to all,
All is for individuals, all is for you,
No condition is prohibited, not God's or any.

All comes by the body, only health puts you rapport with the
universe.

Produce great Persons, the rest follows.

4

Piety and conformity to them that like,
Peace, obesity, allegiance, to them that like,
I am he who tauntingly compels men, women, nations,
Crying, Leap from your seats and contend for your lives!

I am he who walks the States with a barb'd tongue, questioning
every one I meet,
Who are you that wanted only to be told what you knew
before?
Who are you that wanted only a book to join you in your
nonsense?

(With pangs and cries as thine own, O bearer of many children,
These clamours wild to a race of pride I give.)

O land, would you be freer than all that has ever been before?
If you would be freer than all that has been before, come listen
to me.

Fear grace, elegance, civilisation, delicatessen,
Fear the mellow sweet, the sucking of honey-juice,
Beware the advancing mortal ripening of Nature,
Beware what precedes the decay of the ruggedness of states and
men.

5

Ages, precedents, have long been accumulating undirected
materials,
America brings builders, and brings its own styles.

The immortal poets of Asia and Europe have done their work
and pass'd to other spheres,
A work remains, the work of surpassing all they have done.

America, curious toward foreign characters, stands by its own at
all hazards,
Stands removed, spacious, composite, sound, initiates the true
use of precedents,
Does not repel them or the past or what they have produced
under their forms,
Takes the lesson with calmness, perceives the corpse slowly
borne from the house,
Perceives that it waits a little while in the door, that it was
fittest for its days,
That its life has descended to the stalwart and well-shaped heir
who approaches,
And that he shall be fittest for his days.

Any period one nation must lead,
One land must be the promise and reliance of the future.

These States are the amplest poem,
Here is not merely a nation but a teeming Nation of nations,
Here the doings of men correspond with the broadcast doings
of the day and night,
Here is what moves in magnificent masses careless of particulars,
Here are the roughs, beards, friendliness, combativeness, the
soul loves,
Here the flowing trains, here the crowds, equality, diversity, the
soul loves.

6

Land of lands and bards to corroborate!
Of them standing among them, one lifts to the light a west-bred
face,
To him the hereditary countenance bequeath'd both mother's
and father's,

His first parts substances, earth, water, animals, trees,
Built of the common stock, having room for far and near,
Used to dispense with other lands, incarnating thine
Attracting it body and soul to himself, hanging on its neck with
incomparable love,
Plunging his seminal muscle into its merits and demerits,
Making its cities, beginnings, events, diversities, wars, vocal in him,
Making its rivers, lakes, bays, embouchure in him,
Mississippi with yearly freshets and changing chutes, Columbia,
• Niagara, Hudson, spending themselves lovingly in him,
If the Atlantic coast stretch or the Pacific coast stretch, he
stretching with them North or South,
Spanning between them East and West, and touching whatever
is between them,
Growths growing from him to offset the growths of pine, cedar,
hemlock, live-oak, locust, chestnut, luckory, cottonwood,
orange, magnolia,
Tangles as tangled in him as any canebrake or swamp,
He likening sides and peaks of mountains, forests coated with
northern transparent ice,
Off him pasturage sweet and natural as savanna, upland, prairie,
Through him flights, whirls, screams, answering those of the fish-
hawk, mocking-bird, night-heron, and eagle,
His spirit surrounding his country's spirit, unclosed to good and
evil,
Surrounding the essences of real things, old times and present
times,
Surrounding just found shores, islands, tribes of red aborigines,
Weather-beaten vessels, landings, settlements, embryo stature
and muscle,
The haughty defiance of the Year One, war, peace, the formation
of the Constitution,
The separate States, the simple elastic scheme, the immigrants,
The Union always swarming with blatherers and always sure
and impregnable,
The unsurvey'd interior, log-houses, clearings, wild animals,
hunters, trappers,
Surrounding the multiform agriculture, mines, temperature, the
gestation of new States,
Congress convening every Twelfth-month, the members duly
coming up from the uttermost parts,
Surrounding the noble character of mechanics and farmers.
especially the young men,

Responding their manners, speech, dress, friendships, the gait
 they have of persons who never knew how it felt to stand
 in the presence of superiors,
 The freshness and candour of their physiognomy; the copious-
 ness and decision of their phrenology,
 The picturesque looseness of their carriage, their fierceness when
 wrong'd,
 The fluency of their speech, their delight in music, their curiosity,
 good temper, and open-handedness, the whole composite
 make,
 The prevailing ardour and enterprise, the large amativeness,
 The perfect equality of the female with the male; the fluid
 movement of the population,
 The superior marine, free commerce, fisheries, whaling, gold-
 digging,
 Wharf-hemm'd cities, railroad and steamboat lines intersecting
 all points,
 Factories, mercantile life, labour-saving machinery, the North-
 east, North-west, South-west,
 Manhattan firemen, the Yankee swap, southern plantation life,
 Slavery—the murderous, treacherous conspiracy to raise it upon
 the ruins of all the rest,
 On and on to the grapple with it—Assassin! then your life or
 ours be the stake, and respite no more.

7

(Lo, high toward heaven, this day,
 Libertad, from the conqueress' field return'd,
 I mark the new aureola around your head,
 No more of soft astral, but dazzling and fierce,
 With war's flames and the lambent lightnings playing,
 And your port immovable where you stand,
 With still the inextinguishable glance and the clinch'd and lifted
 fist,
 And your foot on the neck of the menacing one, the scorner
 utterly crush'd beneath you,
 The menacing arrogant one that strode and advanced with his
 senseless scorn, bearing the murderous knife,
 The wide-swelling one, the braggart that would yesterday do so
 much,
 To-day a carrion dead and damn'd, the despised of all the earth,
 An offal rank, to the dunghill maggots spurn'd.)

8

Others take finish, but the Republic is ever constructive and
 ever keeps vista,
 Others adorn the past, but you, O days of the present, I adorn you
 O days of the future I believe in you—I isolate myself for your
 sake,
 O America, because you build for mankind I build for you,
 O well-beloved stone-cutters, I lead them who plan with decision
 and sciencé,
 Lead the present with friendly hand toward the future.

(Bravas to all impulses sending sane children to the next age!
 But damn that which spends itself with no thought of the stain,
 pains, dismay, feebleness, it is bequeathing.)

9

I listened to the Phantom by Ontario's shore,
 I heard the voice arising demanding bards.
 By them all native and grand, by them alone can these States be
 fused into the compact organism of a Nation.

To hold men together by paper and seal or by compulsion is no
 account,
 That only holds men together which aggregates all in a living
 principle, as the hold of the limbs of the body or the fibres
 of plants.

Of all races and eras these States with veins full of poetical stuff
 most need poets, and are to have the greatest, and use
 them the greatest,
 Their Presidents shall not be their common referce so much as
 their poets shall,

(Soul of love and tongue of fire!
 Eye to pierce the deepest deeps and sweep the world!
 Ah, Mother, prolific and full in all besides, yet how long barren,
 barren?)

10

Of these States the poet is the equable man,
 Not in him but off from him things are grotesque, eccentric, fail
 of their full returns,

Nothing out of its place is good, nothing in its place is bad,
 He bestows on every object or quality its fit proportion, neither
 more nor less,

He is the arbiter of the diverse, he is the key,

He is the equaliser of his age and land,

He supplies what wants supplying, he checks what wants checking,
 In peace out of him speaks the spirit of peace, large, rich, thrifty,
 building populous towns, encouraging agriculture, arts,
 commerce, lighting the study of man, the soul, health,
 immortality, government,

In war he is the best backer of the war, he fetches artillery as
 good as the engineer's, he can make every word he speaks
 draw blood,

The years straying toward infidelity he withholds by his steady
 faith,

He is no arguer, he is judgment (Nature accepts him absolutely),
 He judges not as the judge judges but as the sun falling round a
 helpless thing,

As he sees the farthest he has the most faith,

His thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things,

In the dispute on God and eternity he is silent,

He sees eternity less like a play with a prologue and dénouement,
 He sees eternity in men and women, he does not see men and
 women as dreams or dots.

For the great Idea, the idea of perfect and free individuals,
 For that, the bard walks in advance, leader of leaders,
 The attitude of him cheers up slaves and horrifies foreign despots.

Without extinction is Liberty, without retrograde is Equality,
 They live in the feelings of young men and the best women,
 (Not for nothing have the indomitable heads of the earth been
 always ready to fall for Liberty).

II

For the great Idea,

That, O my brethren, that is the mission of poets.

Songs of stern defiance ever ready,

Songs of the rapid arming and the march,

The flag of peace quick-folded, and instead the flag we know,

Warlike flag of the great Idea.

(Angry cloth I saw there leaping!
 I stand again in leaden rain your flapping folds saluting,
 I sing you over all, flying beckoning through the light—O the
 hard-contested fight!
 The cannons open their rosy-flashing muzzles—the hurtled balls
 scream,
 The battle-front forms amid the smoke—the volleys pour
 incessant from the line,
 Hark, the ringing word *Charge!*—now the tussle and the furious
 maddening yells,
 Now the corpses tumble curl'd upon the ground,
 Cold, cold in death, for precious life of you,
 Angry cloth I saw there leaping.)

12

Are you he who would assume a place to teach or be a poet here
 in the States?

The place is august, the terms obdurate.

Who would assume to teach here may well prepare himself body
 and mind,

He may well survey, ponder, arm, fortify, harden, make lithe
 himself,

He shall surely be question'd beforehand by me with many and
 stern questions.

Who are you indeed who would talk or sing to America?

Have you studied out the land, its idioms and men?

Have you learn'd the physiology, phrenology, politics, geo-
 graphy, pride, freedom, friendship of the land? its sub-
 stratums and objects?

Have you consider'd the organic compact of the first day of the
 first year of Independence, sign'd by the Commissioners,
 ratified by the States, and read by Washington at the head
 of the army?

Have you possess'd yourself of the Federal Constitution?

Do you see who have left all feudal processes and poems behind
 them, and assumed the poems and processes of Democracy?

Are you faithful to things? do you teach what the land and sea,
 the bodies of men, womanhood, amateness, heroic angers,
 teach?

Have you sped through fleeting customs, popularities?

Can you hold your hand against all seductions, follies, whirls,
fierce contentions? are you very strong? are you really of
the whole People?

Are you not of some coterie? some school or mere religion?
Are you done with reviews and criticisms of life? animating now
to life itself?

Have you vivified yourself from the maternity of these States?

Have you too the old ever-fresh forbearance and impartiality?

Do you hold the like love for those hardening to maturity? for
the last-born? little and big? and for the errant?

What is this you bring my America?

Is it uniform with my country?

Is it not something that has been better told or done before?

Have you not imported this or the spirit of it in some
ship?

Is it not a mere tale? a rhyme? a prettiness?—is the good old
cause in it?

Has it not dangled long at the heels of the poets, politicians,
literats, of enemies' lands?

Does it not assume that what is notoriously gone is still
here?

Does it answer universal needs? will it improve manners?

Does it sound with trumpet-voice the proud victory of the
Union in that secession war?

Can your performance face the open fields and the seaside?

Will it absorb into me as I absorb food, air, to appear again in
my strength, gait, face?

Have real employments contributed to it? original makers, not
mere amanuenses?

Does it meet modern discoveries, calibres, facts, face to face?

What does it mean to American persons, progresses, cities?
Chicago, Kanada, Arkansas?

Does it see behind the apparent custodians the real custodians
standing, menacing, silent, the mechanics, Manhattanese,
Western men, Southerners, significant alike in their apathy,
and in the promptness of their love?

Does it see what finally befalls, and has always finally befallen,
each temporiser, patcher, outsider, partialist, alarmist,
infidel, who has ever ask'd anything of America?

What mocking and scornful negligence?

The track strew'd with the dust of skeletons,
By the roadside others disdainfully toss'd.

13

Rhymes and rhymers pass away, poems distill'd from poems
 pass away,
 The swarms of reflectors and the polite pass, and leeches, ashes,
 Admirers, importers, obedient persons, make but the soil of
 literature,
 America justifies itself, give it time, no disguise can deceive it or
 conceal from it, it is impassive enough,
 Only toward the likes of itself will it advance to meet them,
 If its poets appear it will in due time advance to meet them,
 there is no fear of mistake,
 (The proof of a poet shall be sternly deferred till his country
 absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorb'd it).

He masters whose spirit masters, he tastes sweetest who results
 sweetest in the long run,
 The blood of the brawn beloved of time is unconstraint;
 In the need of songs, philosophy, an appropriate native grand-
 opera, shipcraft, any craft,
 He or she is greatest who contributes the greatest original
 practical example.

Already a nonchalant breed, silently emerging, appears on the
 streets,
 People's lips salute only doers, lovers, satisfiers, positive knowers,
 There will shortly be no more priests, I say their work is done,
 Death is without emergencies here, but life is perpetual emer-
 gencies here,
 Are your body, days, manners, superb? after death you shall be
 superb,
 Justice, health, self-esteem, clear the way with irresistible power;
 How dare you place anything before a man?

14

Fall behind me States!
 A man before all—myself, typical, before all.

Give me the pay I have served for,
 Give me to sing the songs of the great Idea, take all the rest,
 I have loved the earth, sun, animals, I have despised riches,
 I have given alms to every one that ask'd, stood up for the
 stupid and crazy, devoted my income and labour to others,

Hated tyrants, argued not concerning God, had patience and
indulgence toward the people, taken off my hat to nothing
known or unknown,

Gone freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the
young, and with the mothers of families,

Read these leaves to myself in the open air, tried them by trees,
stars, rivers,

Dismiss'd whatever insulted my own soul or defiled my
body,

Claim'd nothing to myself which I have not carefully claim'd for
others on the same terms,

Sped to the camps, and comrades found and accepted 'from every
State,

(Upon this breast has many a dying soldier lean'd to breathe his
last,

This arm, this hand, this voice, have nourish'd, rais'd, restored,
To life recalling many a prostrate form);

I am willing to wait to be understood by the growth of the taste
of myself,

Rejecting none, permitting all.

(Say, O Mother, have I not to your thought been faithful?
Have I not through life kept you and yours before me?)

15

I swear I begin to see the meaning of these things,
It is not the earth, it is not America who is so great,
It is I who am great or to be great, it is You up there, or any
one,

It is to walk rapidly through civilisations, governments, theories,
Through poems, pageants, shows, to form individuals.

Underneath all, individuals,
I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores individuals,
The American compact is altogether with individuals,
The only government is that which makes minute of individuals,
The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one
single individual—namely to You.

(Mother! with subtle sense severe, with the naked sword in your
hand,

I saw you at last refuse to treat but directly with individuals.)

16

Underneath all, Nativity,
I swear I will stand by my own nativity, pious or impious; so be it;
I swear I am charm'd with nothing except nativity,
Men, women, cities, nations, are only beautiful from nativity.

Underneath all is the Expression of love for men and women,
(I swear I have seen enough of mean and impotent modes of
expressing love for men and women,
After this day I take my own modes of expressing love for men
and women).

I swear I will have each quality of my race in myself,
(Talk as you like, he only suits these States whose manners
favour the audacity and sublime turbulence of the States).

Underneath the lessons of things, spirits, Nature, governments,
ownerships, I swear I perceive other lessons,
Underneath all to me is myself, to you yourself (the same
monotonous old song).

17

O I see flashing that this America is only you and me,
Its power, weapons, testimony, are you and me,
Its crimes, lies, thefts, defections, are you and me,
Its Congress is you and me, the officers, capitols, armies, ships,
are you and me,

Its endless gestations of new States are you and me,
The war (that war so bloody and grim, the war I will henceforth
forget), was you and me,
Natural and artificial are you and me,
Freedom, language, poems, employments, are you and me,
Past, present, future, are you and me.

I dare not shirk any part of myself,
Not any part of America good or bad,
Not to build for that which builds for mankind,
Not to balance ranks, complexions, creeds, and the sexes,
Not to justify science nor the march of equality,
Nor to feed the arrogant blood of the brawn belov'd of time.

I am for those that have never been master'd,
For men and women whose tempers have never been master'd,
For those whom laws, theories, conventions, can never master.

I am for those who walk abreast with the whole earth,
Who inaugurate one to inaugurate all.

I will not be outfaced by irrational things,
I will penetrate what it is in them that is sarcastic upon me,
I will make cities and civilisations defer to me,
This is what I have learnt from America—it is the amount, and
it I teach again.

(Democracy, while weapons were everywhere aim'd at your
breast,
I saw you serenely give birth to immortal children, saw in dreams
your dilating form,
Saw you with spreading mantle covering the world.)

18

I will confront these shows of the day and night,
I will know if I am to be less than they,
I will see if I am not as majestic as they,
I will see if I am not as subtle and real as they,
I will see if I am to be less generous than they,
I will see if I have no meaning, while the houses and ships have
meaning,
I will see if the fishes and birds are to be enough for themselves,
and I am not to be enough for myself.

I match my spirit against yours you orbs, growths, mountains,
brutes,
Copious as you are I absorb you all in myself, and become the
master myself,
America isolated yet embodying all, what is it finally except
myself?
These States, what are they except myself?

I know now why the earth is gross, tantalising, wicked, it is for
my sake,
I take you specially to be mine, you terrible, rude forms

(Mother, bend down, bend close to me your face,
I know not what these plots and wars and deferments are for,
I know not fruition's success, but I know that through war and
crime your work goes on, and must yet go on.)

19

Thus by blue Ontario's shore,
While the winds fann'd me and the waves came trooping toward
me,
I thrill'd with the power's pulsations, and the charm of my theme
was upon me,
Till the tissues that held me parted their ties upon me.

And I saw the free souls of poets,
The loftiest bards of past ages strode before me,
Strange large men, long unwoke, undisclosed, were disclosed
to me.

20

O my rapt verse, my call, mock me not!
Not for the bards of the past, not to invoke them have I launch'd
you forth,
Not to call even those lofty bards here by Ontario's shores,
Have I sung so capricious and loud my savage song.

Bards for my own land only I invoke
(For the war, the war is over, the field is clear'd),
Till they strike up marches henceforth triumphant and onward,
To cheer, O Mother, your boundless expectant soul.

Bards of the great Idea! bards of the peaceful inventions! (for
the war, the war is over!)
Yet bards of latent armies, a million soldiers waiting, ever-ready,
Bards with songs as from burning coals or the lightning's fork'd
stripes!
Ample Ohio's, Kanada's bards—bards of California! inland
bards—bards of the war!
You by my charm I invoke.

REVERSALS

Let that which stood in front go behind,
Let that which was behind advance to the front,
Let bigots, fools, unclean persons, offer new propositions,
Let the old propositions be postponed,
Let a man seek pleasure everywhere except in himself,
Let a woman seek happiness everywhere except in herself.

DEMOCRATIC VISTAS

DEMOCRATIC VISTAS

As the greatest lessons of Nature through the universe are perhaps the lessons of variety and freedom, the same present the greatest lessons also in New World politics and progress. If a man were asked, for instance, the distinctive points contrasting modern European and American political and other life with the old Asiatic cultus, as lingering-bequeathed yet in China and Turkey, he might find the amount of them in John Stuart Mill's profound essay on Liberty in the future, where he demands two main constituents, or sub-strata, for a truly grand nationality—1st, a large variety of character—and 2nd, full play for human nature to expand itself in numberless and even conflicting directions—(seems to be for general humanity much like the influences that make up, in their limitless field, that perennial health-action of the air we call the weather—an infinite number of currents and forces, and contributions, and temperatures, and cross purposes, whose ceaseless play of counterpart upon counterpart brings constant restoration and vitality). With this thought—and not for itself alone, but all it necessitates, and draws after it—let me begin my speculations.

America, filling the present with greatest deeds and problems, cheerfully accepting the past, including feudalism (as, indeed, the present is but the legitimate birth of the past, including feudalism), counts, as I reckon, for her justification and success (for who, as yet, dare claim success?) almost entirely on the future. Nor is that hope unwarranted. To-day, ahead, though dimly yet, we see, in vistas, a copious, sane, gigantic offspring. For our New World I consider far less important for what it has done, or what it is, than for results to come. Sole among nationalities, these States have assumed the task to put in forms of lasting power and practicality, on areas of amplitude rivalling the operations of the physical kosmos, the moral political speculations of ages, long, long deferred, the democratic republican principle, and the theory of development and perfection by voluntary standards, and self-reliance. Who else, indeed, except the United States, in history, so far, have accepted in unwitting faith, and, as we now see, stand, act upon, and go security for, these things?

But precluding no longer, let me strike the key-note of the following strain. First premising that, though the passages of it have been written at widely different times (it is, in fact, a collection of memoranda, perhaps for future designers, comprehenders), and though it may be open to the charge of one part contradicting another—for there are opposite sides to the great question of democracy, as to every great question—I feel the parts harmoniously blended in my own realisation and convictions, and present them to be read only in such oneness, each page and each claim and assertion modified and tempered by the others. Bear in mind, too, that they are not the result of studying up in political economy, but of the ordinary sense, observing, wandering among men, these States, these stirring years of war and peace. I will not gloss over the appalling dangers of universal suffrage in the United States. In fact, it is to admit and face these dangers I am writing. To him or her within whose thought rages the battle, advancing, retreating, between democracy's convictions, aspirations, and the people's crudeness, vice, caprices, I mainly write this essay. I shall use the words America and democracy as convertible terms. Not an ordinary one is the issue. The United States are destined either to surmount the gorgeous history of feudalism, or else prove the most tremendous failure of time. Not the least doubtful am I on any prospects of their material success. The triumphant future of their business, geographic and productive departments, on larger scales and in more varieties than ever, is certain. In those respects the republic must soon (if she does not already) outstrip all examples hitherto afforded, and dominate the world.¹

¹ "From a territorial area of less than nine hundred thousand square miles, the Union has expanded into over four millions and a half—fifteen times larger than that of Great Britain and France combined—with a shore-line, including Alaska, equal to the entire circumference of the earth, and with a domain within these lines far wider than that of the Romans in their proudest days of conquest and renown. With a river, lake, and coastwise commerce estimated at over two thousand millions of dollars per year; with a railway traffic of four to six thousand millions per year, and the annual domestic exchanges of the country running up to nearly ten thousand millions per year; with over two thousand millions of dollars invested in manufacturing, mechanical, and mining industry; with over five hundred millions of acres of land in actual occupancy, valued, with their appurtenances, at over seven thousand millions of dollars, and producing annually crops valued at over three thousand millions of dollars; with a realm which, if the density of Belgium's population were possible, would be vast enough to include all the present inhabitants of the world; and with equal rights guaranteed to even the poorest and humblest of our forty millions of people—we can, with a manly pride akin to that which

Admitting all this, with the priceless value of our political institutions, general suffrage (and fully acknowledging the latest, widest opening of the doors), I say that, far deeper than these, what finally and only is to make of our western world a nationality superior to any hither known, and outtopping the past, must be vigorous, yet unsuspected Literatures, perfect personalities and sociologies, original, transcendental, and expressing (what, in highest sense, are not yet expressed at all) democracy and the modern. With these, and out of these, I promulgate new races of Teachers, and of perfect Women, indispensable to endow the birth-stock of a New World. For feudalism, caste, the ecclesiastic traditions, though palpably retreating from political institutions, still hold essentially by their spirit, even in this country, entire possession of the more important fields, indeed the very subsoil, of education, and of social standards and literature.

I say that democracy can never prove itself beyond cavil, until it sounds and luxuriantly grows its own forms of art, poems, schools, theology displacing all that exist, or that has been produced anywhere in the past, under opposite influences. It is curious to me that while so many voices, poets, minds, in the press, lecture rooms, in our Congress, etc., are discussing intellectual topics, pecuniary dangers, legislative problems, the suffrage, tariff and labour questions, and the various business and benevolent needs of America, with propositions remedies, often worth deep attention, there is one need, a hiatus the profoundest, that no eye seems to perceive, no voice to state. Our

distinguished the palmiest days of Rome, claim' etc., etc., etc.—*President Colfax's Speech July 4, 1871*

LATER—*London Times (Weekly)* June 23, 82

The wonderful wealth producing power of the United States defies and sets at naught the grave drawbacks of a mischievous protective tariff and has already obliterated almost wholly the traces of the greatest of modern civil wars. What is especially remarkable in the present development of American energy and success is its wide and equitable distribution. North and south, east and west on the shores of the Atlantic and the Pacific along the chain of the great lakes, in the valley of the Mississippi, and on the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico, the creation of wealth and the increase of population are signally exhibited. It is quite true as has been shown by the recent apportionment of population in the House of Representatives, that some sections of the Union have advanced, relatively to the rest, in an extraordinary and unexpected degree. But this does not imply that the States which have gained no additional representatives or have actually lost some have been stationary or have receded. The fact is that the present tide of prosperity has risen so high that it has overflowed all barriers and has filled up the backwaters, and established something like an approach to uniform success."

fundamental want to-day in the United States, with closest, amplest reference to present conditions, and to the future, is of a class, and the clear idea of a class, of native authors, literatures, far different, far higher in grade, than any yet known, sacerdotal, modern, fit to cope with our occasions, lands, permeating the whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief, breathing into it a new breath of life, giving it decision, affecting politics far more than the popular superficial suffrage, with results inside and underneath the elections of Presidents or Congresses—radiating, begetting appropriate teachers, schools, manners, and, as its grandest result, accomplishing (what neither the schools nor the churches and their clergy have hitherto accomplished, and without which this nation will no more stand, permanently, soundly, than a house will stand without a substratum), a religious and moral character beneath the political and productive and intellectual bases of the States. For know you not, dear, earnest reader, that the people of our land may all read and write, and may all possess the right to vote—and yet the main things may be entirely lacking?—(and this to suggest them).

Viewed, to-day, from a point of view sufficiently over-arching, the problem of humanity all over the civilised world is social and religious, and is to be finally met and treated by literature. The priest departs, the divine literatus comes. Never was anything more wanted than, to-day, and here in the States, the poet of the modern is wanted, or the great literatus of the modern. At all times, perhaps, the central point in any nation, and that whence it is itself really swayed the most, and whence it sways others, is its national literature, especially its archetypal poems. Above all previous lands, a great original literature is surely to become the justification and reliance (in some respects the sole reliance) of American democracy.

Few are aware how the great literature penetrates all, gives hue to all, shapes aggregates and individuals, and, after subtle ways, with irresistible power, constructs, sustains, demolishes at will. Why tower, in reminiscence, above all the nations of the earth, two special lands, petty in themselves, yet inexpressibly gigantic, beautiful, columnar? Immortal Judah lives, and Greece immortal lives, in a couple of poems.

Nearer than this. It is not generally realised, but it is true, as the genius of Greece, and all the sociology, personality, politics, and religion of those wonderful states, resided in their literature—or esthetics, that what was afterwards the main sup-

port of European chivalry, the feudal, ecclesiastical, dynastic world over there—forming its osseous structure, holding it together for hundreds, thousands of years, preserving its flesh and bloom, giving it form, decision, rounding it out, and so saturating it in the conscious and unconscious blood, creed, belief, and intuitions of men, that it still prevails powerful to this day, in defiance of the mighty changes of time—was its literature, permeating to the very marrow, especially that major part, its enchanting songs, ballads, and poems.¹

To the ostent of the senses and eyes, I know, the influences which stamp the world's history are wars, uprisings or downfalls of dynasties, changeful movement of trade, important inventions, navigation, military or civil governments, advent of powerful personalities, conquerors, etc. These of course play their part; yet, it may be, a single new thought, imagination, abstract principle, even literary style, fit for the time, put in shape by some great literatus, and projected among mankind, may duly cause changes, growths, removals, greater than the longest and bloodiest war, or the most stupendous merely political, dynastic, or commercial overturn.

In short, as, though it may not be realised, it is strictly true, that a few first-class poets, philosophers, and authors have substantially settled and given status to the entire religion, education, law, sociology, etc., of the hitherto civilised world, by tingeing and often creating the atmospheres out of which they have arisen, such also must stamp, and more than ever stamp, the interior and real democratic construction of this American continent, to-day, and days to come. Remember also this fact of difference, that, while through the antique and through the mediæval ages, highest thoughts and ideals realised themselves, and their expression made its way by other arts, as much as, or even more than by, technical literature (not open to the mass of persons, or even to the majority of eminent persons), such literature in our day and for current purposes is

¹ See, for hereditaments, specimens, Walter Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*, Percy's collection, Ellis's early English Metrical Romances, the European continental poems of Walter of Aquitania, and the Nibelungen, of pagan stock, but monkish-feudal redaction; the history of the Troubadours, by Fauriol; even the far-back cumbrous old Hindu epic, as indicating the Asian eggs out of which European chivalry was hatched; Ticknor's chapters on the Cid, and on the Spanish poems and poets of Calderon's time. Then always, and, of course, as the superbest poetic culmination-expression of feudalism, the Shakespearean dramas, in the attitudes, dialogue, characters, etc., of the princes, lords, and gentlemen, the pervading atmosphere, the implied and expressed standard of manners, the high port and proud stomach, the regal embroidery of style, etc.

not only more eligible than all the other arts put together, but has become the only general means of morally influencing the world. Painting, sculpture, and the dramatic theatre, it would seem, no longer play an indispensable or even important part in the workings and mediumship of intellect, utility, or even high esthetics. Architecture remains, doubtless with capacities, and a real future. Then music, the combiner, nothing more spiritual, nothing more sensuous, a god, yet completely human, advances, prevails, holds highest place; supplying in certain wants and quarters what nothing else could supply. Yet in the civilisation of to-day it is undeniable that, over all the arts, literature dominates, serves beyond all—shapes the character of church and school—or, at any rate, is capable of doing so. Including the literature of science, its scope is indeed unparalleled.

Before proceeding further, it were perhaps well to discriminate on certain points. Literature tills its crops in many fields, and some may flourish, while others lag. What I say in these Vistas has its main bearing on imaginative literature, especially poetry, the stock of all. In the department of science, and the specialty of journalism, there appear, in these States, promises, perhaps fulfilments, of highest earnestness, reality and life. These, of course, are modern. But in the region of imaginative, spinal and essential attributes, something equivalent to creation is, for our age and lands, imperatively demanded. For not only is it not enough that the new blood, new frame of democracy shall be vivified and held together merely by political means, superficial suffrage, legislation, etc., but it is clear to me that, unless it goes deeper, gets at least as firm and as warm a hold in men's hearts, emotions and belief, as, in their days, feudalism or ecclesiasticism, and inaugurates its own perennial sources, welling from the centre for ever, its strength will be defective, its growth doubtful, and its main charm wanting. I suggest, therefore, the possibility, should some two or three really original American poets (perhaps artists or lecturers) arise, mounting the horizon like planets, stars of the first magnitude, that, from their eminence, fusing contributions, races, far localities, etc., together, they would give more compaction and more moral identity (the quality to-day most needed) to these States, than all its Constitutions, legislative and judicial ties, and all its hitherto political, warlike, or materialistic experiences. As, for instance, there could hardly happen anything that would more serve the States, with all their variety of origins, their diverse climes, cities, standards, etc., than possessing an aggregate of

heroes, characters, exploits, sufferings, prosperity or misfortune, glory or disgrace, common to all, typical of it all—no less, but even greater would it be to possess the aggregation or cluster of mighty poets, artists, teachers, fit for us, national exponents, comprehending and effusing for the men and women of the States, what is universal, native, common to all, inland and seaboard, northern and southern. The historians say of ancient Greece, with her ever-jealous autonomies, cities and states, that the only positive unity she ever owned or received, was the sad-unity of a common subjection, at the last, to foreign conquerors. Subjection, aggregation of that sort, is impossible to America; but the fear of conflicting and irreconcilable interiors, and the lack of a common skeleton, knitting all close, continually haunts me. Or, if it does not, nothing is plainer than the need, a long period to come, of a fusion of the States into the only reliable identity, the moral and artistic one. For, I say, the true nationality of the States, the genuine union, when we come to a mortal crisis, is, and is to be, after all, neither the written law, nor (as is generally supposed) either self-interest, of common pecuniary or material objects—but the fervid and tremendous IDEA, melting everything else with resistless heat, and solving all lesser and definite distinctions in vast, indefinite, spiritual, emotional power.

It may be claimed (and I admit the weight of the claim) that common and general worldly prosperity, and a populace well-to-do, and with all life's material comforts, is the main thing, and is enough. It may be argued that our republic is, in performance, really enacting to-day the grandest arts, poems, etc., by beating up the wilderness into fertile farms, and in her railroads, ships, machinery, etc. And it may be asked, Are these not better, indeed, for America, than any utterances even of greatest rhapsode, artist, or literatus?

I too hail those achievements with pride and joy: then answer that the soul of man will not with such only—nay, not with such at all—be finally satisfied; but needs what (standing on these and on all things, as the feet stand on the ground) is addressed to the loftiest, to itself alone.

Out of such considerations, such truths, arises for treatment in these Vistas the important question of character, of an American stock-personality, with literatures and arts for outlets and return-expressions, and, of course, to correspond, within outlines common to all. To these, the main affair, the thinkers of the United States, in general so acute, have either

given feeblest attention, or have remained, and remain, in a state of somnolence.

For my part, I would alarm and caution even the political and business reader, and to the utmost extent, against the prevailing delusion that the establishment of free political institutions, and plentiful intellectual smartness, with general good order, physical plenty, industry, etc. (desirable and precious advantages as they all are), do, of themselves, determine and yield to our experiment of democracy the fruitage of success. With such advantages at present fully, or almost fully, possessed—the Union just issued, victorious, from the struggle with the only foes it need ever fear (namely, those within itself, the interior ones), and with unprecedented materialistic advancement—society, in these States, is cankered, crude, superstitious and rotten. Political, or law-made society is, and private, or voluntary society, is also. In any vigour, the element of the moral conscience, the most important, the vertebra to State or man, seems to me either entirely lacking, or seriously enfeebled or ungrown.

I say we had best look our times and lands searchingly in the face, like a physician diagnosing some deep disease. Never was there, perhaps, more hollowness at heart than at present, and here in the United States. Genuine belief seems to have left us. The underlying principles of the States are not honestly believed in (for all this hectic glow, and these melodramatic screamings), nor is humanity itself believed in. What penetrating eye does not everywhere see through the mask? The spectacle is appalling. We live in an atmosphere of hypocrisy throughout. The men believe not in the women, nor the women in the men. A scornful superciliousness rules in literature. The aim of all the *littérateurs* is to find something to make fun of. A lot of churches, sects, etc., the most dismal phantasms I know, usurp the name of religion. Conversation is a mass of badinage. From deceit in the spirit, the mother of all false deeds, the offspring is already incalculable. An acute and candid person, in the revenue department in Washington, who is led by the course of his employment to regularly visit the cities, north, south, and west, to investigate frauds, has talked much with me about his discoveries. The depravity of the business classes of our country is not less than has been supposed, but infinitely greater. The official services of America, national, state, and municipal, in all their branches and departments, except the judiciary, are saturated in corruption, bribery, false-

hood, mal-administration; and the judiciary is tainted. The great cities reek with respectable as much as non-respectable robbery and scoundrelism. In fashionable life, flippant, tepid amours, weak infidelism, small aims, or no aims at all, only to kill time. In business (this all-devouring modern *modus vivendi*, business), the one sole object is, by any means, pecuniary gain. The magician's serpent in the fable ate up all the other serpents; and money-making is our magician's serpent, remaining to-day sole master of the field. The best class we show, is but a mob of fashionably dressed speculators and vulgarians. True, indeed, behind this fantastic farce, enacted on the visible stage of society, solid things and stupendous labours are to be discovered, existing crudely and going on in the background, to advance and tell themselves in time. Yet the truths are none the less terrible. I say that our New World democracy, however great a success in uplifting the masses out of their sloughs, in materialistic development, products, and in a certain highly-deceptive superficial popular intellectuality, is, so far, an almost complete failure in its social aspects, and in really grand religious, moral, literary, and esthetic results. In vain do we march with unprecedented strides to empire so colossal, outvying the antique, beyond Alexander's, beyond the proudest sway of Rome. In vain have we annexed Texas, California, Alaska, and reach north for Canada and south for Cuba. It is as if we were somehow being endowed with a vast and more and more thoroughly-appointed body, and then left with little or no soul.

Let me illustrate further, as I write, with current observations, localities, etc. The subject is important, and will bear repetition. After an absence, I am now again (September, 1870) in New York city and Brooklyn, on a few weeks' vacation. The splendour, picturesqueness, and oceanic amplitude and rush of these great cities, the unsurpassed situation, rivers and bay, sparkling sea-tides, costly and lofty new buildings, façades of marble and iron, of original grandeur and elegance of design, with the masses of gay colour, the preponderance of white and blue, the flags flying, the endless ships, the tumultuous streets, Broadway, the heavy, low, musical roar, hardly ever intermitted, even at night; the jobbers' houses, the rich shops, the wharves, the great Central Park, and the Brooklyn Park of hills (as I wander among them this beautiful fall weather, musing, watching, absorbing)—the assemblages of the citizens in their groups, conversations, trades, evening amusements, or

along the by-quarters—these, I say, and the like of these, completely satisfy my senses of power, fulness, motion, etc., and give me, through such senses and appetites, and through my esthetic conscience, a continued exaltation and absolute fulfilment. Always and more and more, as I cross the East and North rivers, the ferries, or with the pilots in their pilot-houses, or pass an hour in Wall Street, or the Gold Exchange, I realise (if we must admit such partialisms) that not Nature alone is great in her fields of freedom and the open air, in her storms, the shows of night and day, the mountains, forests, seas—but in the artificial, the work of man too is equally great—in this profusion of teeming humanity—in these ingenuities, streets, goods, houses, ships—these hurrying, feverish, electric crowds of men, their complicated business genius (not least among the geniuses), and all this mighty, many-threaded wealth and industry concentrated here.

But sternly discarding, shutting our eyes to the glow and grandeur of the general superficial effect, coming down to what is of the only real importance, Personalities, and examining minutely, we question, we ask, Are there, indeed, *men*—here worthy the name? Are there athletes? Are there perfect women, to match the generous material luxuriance? Is there a pervading atmosphere of beautiful manners? Are there crops of fine youths, and majestic old persons? Are there arts worthy freedom and a rich people? Is there a great moral and religious civilisation—the only justification of a great material one? Confess that to severe eyes, using the moral microscope upon humanity, a sort of dry and flat Sahara appears, these cities, crowded with petty grotesques, malformations, phantoms, playing meaningless antics. Confess that everywhere, in shop, street, church, theatre, bar-room, official chair, are pervading flippancy and vulgarity, low cunning, infidelity—everywhere the youth puny, impudent, foppish, prematurely ripe—everywhere an abnormal libidinousness, unhealthy forms, male, female, painted, padded, dyed, chignoned, muddy complexions, bad blood, the capacity for good motherhood decreasing or deceased, shallow notions of beauty, with a range of manners, or rather lack of manners (considering the advantages enjoyed), probably the meanest to be seen in the world.¹

¹ Of these rapidly-sketched hiatuses, the two which seem to be most serious are, for one, the condition, absence, or perhaps the singular abeyance, of moral conscientious fibre all through American society; and, for another, the appalling depletion of women in their powers of sane athletic

Of all this, and these lamentable conditions, to breathe into them the breath recuperative of sane and heroic life. I say a new-founded literature, not merely to copy and reflect existing surfaces, or pander to what is called taste—not only to amuse, pass away time, celebrate the beautiful, the refined, the past, or exhibit technical, rhythmic, or grammatical dexterity—but a literature underlying life, religious, consistent with science, handling the elements and forces with competent power, teaching and training men—and, as perhaps the most precious of its results, achieving the entire redemption of woman out of these incredible holds and webs of silliness, millinery, and every kind of dyspeptic depletion—and thus insuring to the States a strong and sweet Female Race, a race of perfect Mothers—is what is needed.

And now, in the full conception of these facts and points, and all that they infer, pro and con—with yet unshaken faith in the elements of the American masses, the composites, of both sexes, and even considered as individuals—and ever recognising in them the broadest bases of the best literary and esthetic appreciation—I proceed with my speculations, *Vistas*.

First, let us see what we can make out of a brief, general, sentimental consideration of political democracy, and whence it has arisen, with regard to some of its current features, as an aggregate, and as the basic structure of our future literature and authorship. We shall, it is true, quickly and continually find the origin-idea of the singleness of man, individualism, asserting itself, and cropping forth, even from the opposite ideas. But the mass, or lump character, for imperative reasons, is to be ever carefully weighed, borne in mind, and provided for. Only from it, and from its proper regulation and potency, comes the other, comes the chance of individualism. The two are contradictory, but our task is to reconcile them.¹

maternity, their crowning attribute, and ever making the woman, in loftiest spheres, superior to the man.

I have sometimes thought, indeed, that the sole avenue and means of a reconstructed sociology depended, primarily, on a new birth, elevation, expansion, invigoration of woman, affording, for races to come (as the conditions that antedate birth are indispensable), a perfect motherhood. Great, great, indeed, far greater than they know, is the sphere of women. But doubtless the question of such new sociology all goes together, includes many varied and complex influences and premises, and the man as well as the woman, and the woman as well as the man.

¹ The question hinted here is one which time only can answer. Must not the virtue of modern Individualism, continually enlarging, usurping all, seriously affect, perhaps keep down entirely, in America, the like of the ancient virtue of Patriotism, the fervid and absorbing love of general

The political history of the past may be summed up as having grown out of what underlies the words, order, safety, caste, and especially out of the need of some prompt deciding authority, and of cohesion at all cost. Leaping time, we come to the period within the memory of people now living, when, as from some lair where they had slumbered long, accumulating wrath, sprang up and are yet active (1790, and on even to the present, 1870), those noisy eruptions, destructive iconoclasms, a fierce sense of wrongs, amid which moves the form, well known in modern history, in the old world, stained with much blood, and marked by savage reactionary clamours and demands. These bear, mostly, as on one inclosing point of need.

For after the rest is said—after the many time-honoured and really true things for subordination, experience, rights of property, etc., have been listened to and acquiesced in—after the valuable and well-settled statement of our duties and relations in society is thoroughly conned over and exhausted—it remains to bring forward and modify everything else with the idea of that Something a man is (last precious consolation of the drudging poor), standing apart from all else, divine in his own right, and a woman in hers, sole and untouchable by any canons of authority, or any rule derived from precedent, state-safety, the acts of legislatures, or even from what is called religion, modesty, or art. The radiation of this truth is the key of the most significant doings of our immediately preceding three centuries, and has been the political genesis and life of America. Advancing visibly, it still more advances invisibly. Underneath the fluctuations of the expressions of society, as well as the movements of the politics of the leading nations of the world, we see steadily pressing ahead and strengthening itself, even in the midst of immense tendencies toward aggregation, this image of completeness in separation, of individual personal dignity, of a single person, either male or female, characterised in the main, not from extrinsic acquirements or position, but in the pride of himself or herself alone; and, as an eventual conclusion and summing up (or else the entire scheme of things is aimless, a cheat, a crash), the simple idea that the last, best dependence is to be upon humanity itself, and its own inherent, normal, full-grown qualities without any superstitious support whatever. This idea of perfect individualism it is indeed that country? I have no doubt myself that the two will merge, and will mutually profit and brace each other, and that from them a greater product, a third, will arise. But I feel that at present they and their oppositions form a serious problem and paradox in the United States.

deepest tinges and gives character to the idea of the aggregate. For it is mainly or altogether to serve independent separatism that we favour a strong generalisation, consolidation. As it is to give the best vitality and freedom to the rights of the States (every bit as important as the right of nationality, the union), that we insist on the identity of the Union at all hazards.

The purpose of democracy—supplanting old belief in the necessary absoluteness of established dynastic rulership, temporal, ecclesiastical, and scholastic, as furnishing the only security against chaos, crime, and ignorance—is, through many transmigrations and amid endless ridicules, arguments, and ostensible failures, to illustrate, at all hazards, this doctrine or theory that man, properly trained in sanest, highest freedom, may and must become a law, and series of laws, unto himself, surrounding and providing for, not only his own personal control, but all his relations to other individuals, and to the State; and that, while other theories, as in the past histories of nations, have proved wise enough, and indispensable perhaps for their conditions, *this*, as matters now stand in our civilised world, is the only scheme worth working from, as warranting results like those of Nature's laws, reliable, when once established, to carry on themselves.

The argument of the matter is extensive, and, we admit, by no means all on one side. What we shall offer will be far, far from sufficient. But while leaving unsaid much that should properly even prepare the way for the treatment of this many-sided question of political liberty, equality, or republicanism—leaving the whole history and consideration of the feudal plan and its products, embodying humanity, its politics and civilisation, through the retrospect of past time (which plan and products, indeed, make up all of the past, and a large part of the present)—leaving unanswered, at least by any specific and local answer, many a well-wrought argument and instance, and many a conscientious declamatory cry and warning—as, very lately, from an eminent and venerable person abroad¹—things,

¹ *Shooting Niagara*.—I was at first roused to much anger and abuse by this essay from Mr. Carlyle, so insulting to the theory of America—but happening to think afterwards how I had more than once been in the like mood, during which his essay was evidently cast, and seen persons and things in the same light (indeed, some might say there are signs of the same feeling in these Vistas)—I have since read it again, not only as a study, expressing as it does certain judgments from the highest feudal point of view, but have read it with respect as coming from an earnest soul, and as contributing certain sharp-cutting metallic grains, which, if not gold or silver, may be good, hard, honest iron.

problems, full of doubt, dread, suspense (not new to me, but old occupiers of many an anxious hour in city's din, or night's silence), we still may give a page or so, whose drift is opportune. Time alone can finally answer these things. But as a substitute in passing, let us, even if fragmentarily, throw forth a short direct or indirect suggestion of the premises of that other plan, in the new spirit, under the new forms, started here in our America.

As to the political section of Democracy, which introduces and breaks ground for further and vaster sections, few probably are the minds, even in these republican States, that fully comprehend the aptness of that phrase, "THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE," which we inherit from the lips of Abraham Lincoln; a formula whose verbal shape is homely wit, but whose scope includes both the totality and all minutiae of the lesson.

The People! Like our huge earth itself, which, to ordinary scansion, is full of vulgar contradictions and offence, man, viewed in the lump, displeases, and is a constant puzzle and affront to the merely educated classes. The rare, cosmical, artist-mind, lit with the Infinite, alone confronts his manifold and oceanic qualities—but taste, intelligence and culture (so-called), have been against the masses, and remain so. There is plenty of glamour about the most damnable crimes and hoggish meannesses, special and general, of the feudal and dynastic world over there, with its *personnel* of lords and queens and courts, so well-dressed and so handsome. But the People are ungrammatical, untidy, and their sons gaunt and ill-bred.

Literature, strictly considered, has never recognised the People, and, whatever may be said, does not to-day. Speaking generally, the tendencies of literature, as hitherto pursued, have been to make mostly critical and querulous men. It seems as if, so far, there were some natural repugnance between a literary and professional life, and the rude rank spirit of the democracies. There is, in later literature, a treatment of benevolence, a charity business, rife enough it is true; but I know nothing more rare, even in this country, than a fit scientific estimate and reverent appreciation of the People—of their measureless wealth of latent power and capacity, their vast, artistic contrasts of lights and shades—with, in America, their entire reliability in emergencies, and a certain breadth of historic grandeur, of peace or war, far surpassing all the vaunted samples of book-heroes, or any *haut ton* coteries, in all the records of the world.

The movements of the late secession war, and their results, to any sense that studies well and comprehends them. How that popular democracy, whatever its faults and dangers, practically justifies itself beyond the proudest claims and wildest hopes of its enthusiasts. Probably no future age can know, but I well know, how the gist of this fiercest and most resolute of the world's war-like contentions resided exclusively in the unnamed, unknown rank and file; and how the brunt of its labour of death was, to all essential purposes, volunteered. The People, of their own choice, fighting, dying for their own idea, insolently attacked by the secession-slave-power, and its very existence imperilled. Descending to detail, entering any of the armies, and mixing with the private soldiers, we see and have seen august spectacles. We have seen the alacrity with which the American-born populace, the peaceablest and most good-natured race in the world, and the most personally independent and intelligent, and the least fitted to submit to the irksomeness and exasperation of regimental discipline, sprang, at the first tap of the drum, to arms—not for gain, nor even glory, nor to repel invasion—but for an emblem, a mere abstraction—for the life, *the safety of the flag*. We have seen the unequalled docility and obedience of these soldiers. We have seen them tried long and long by hopelessness, mismanagement, and by defeat; have seen the incredible slaughter toward or through which the armies (as at first Fredricksburg, and afterward at the Wilderness), still unhesitatingly obey'd orders to advance. We have seen them in trench, or crouching behind breastwork, or tramping in deep mud, or amid pouring rain or thick-falling snow, or under forced marches in hottest summer (as on the road to get to Gettysburg)—vast suffocating swarms, divisions, corps, with every single man so grimed and black with sweat and dust, his own mother would not have known him—his clothes all dirty, stained and torn, with sour, accumulated sweat for perfume—many a comrade, perhaps a brother, sun-struck, staggering out, dying, by the roadside, of exhaustion—yet the great bulk bearing steadily on, cheery enough, hollow bellied from hunger, but sinewy with unconquerable resolution.

We have seen this race proved by wholesale, by drearier, yet more fearful tests—the wound, the amputation, the shattered face or limb, the slow hot fever, long impatient anchorage in bed, and all the forms of maiming, operation, and disease. Alas! America have we seen, though only in her early youth, already to hospital brought. There have we watched these soldiers,

many of them only boys in years—marked their decorum, their religious nature and fortitude, and their sweet affection. Wholesale, truly. For at the front, and through the camps, in countless tents, stood the regimental, brigade, and division hospitals; while everywhere amid the land, in or near cities, rose clusters of huge, white-washed, crowded, one-story wooden barracks; and there ruled agony with bitter scourge, yet seldom brought a cry; and there stalked death by day and night along the narrow aisles between the rows of cots, or by the blankets on the ground, and touched lightly many a poor sufferer, often with blessed, welcome touch.

I know not whether I shall be understood, but I realise that it is finally from what I learned personally mixing in such scenes that I am now penning these pages. One night in the gloomiest period of the war, in the Patent office hospital in Washington city, as I stood by the bedside of a Pennsylvania soldier, who lay, conscious of quick approaching death, yet perfectly calm, and with noble, spiritual manner, the veteran surgeon, turning aside, said to me, that though he had witnessed many, many deaths of soldiers, and had been a worker at Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, etc., he had not seen yet the first case of man or boy that met the approach of dissolution with cowardly qualms or terror. My own observation fully bears out the remark.

What have we here, if not, towering above all talk and argument, the plentifully-supplied, last-needed proof of democracy, in its personalities? Curiously enough, too, the proof on this point comes, I should say, every bit as much from the south, as from the north. Although I have spoken only of the latter, yet I deliberately include all. Grand, common stock! to me the accomplished and convincing growth, prophetic of the future; proof undeniable to sharpest sense, of perfect beauty, tenderness and pluck, that never feudal lord, nor Greek, nor Roman breed, yet rivalled. Let no tongue ever speak in disparagement of the American races, north or south, to one who has been through the war in the great army hospitals.

Meantime, general humanity (for to that we return, as, for our purposes, what it really is, to bear in mind), has always, in every department, been full of perverse maleficence, and is so yet. In downcast hours the soul thinks it always will be—but soon recovers from such sickly moods. I myself see clearly enough the crude, defective streaks in all the strata of the common people; the specimens and vast collections of the

ignorant, the credulous, the unfit and uncount, the incapable, and the very low and poor. The eminent person just mentioned sneeringly asks whether we expect to elevate and improve a nation's politics by absorbing such morbid collections and qualities therein. The point is a formidable one, and there will doubtless always be numbers of solid and reflective citizens who will never get over it. Our answer is general, and is involved in the scope and letter of this essay. We believe the ulterior object of political and all other government (having, of course, provided for the police, the safety of life, property, and for the basic statute and common law, and their administration, always first in order), to be among the rest, not merely to rule, to repress disorder, etc., but to develop, to open up to cultivation, to encourage the possibilities of all beneficent and manly outcropage, and of that aspiration for independence, and the pride and self-respect latent in all characters.* (Or, if there be exceptions, we cannot, fixing our eyes on them alone, make theirs the rule for all.)

I say the mission of government, henceforth, in civilised lands, is not repression alone, and not authority alone, not even of law, nor by that favourite standard of the eminent writer, the rule of the best men, the born heroes and captains of the race (as if such ever, or one time out of a hundred, get into the big places, elective or dynastic)—but higher than the highest arbitrary rule, to train communities through all their grades, beginning with individuals and ending there again, to rule themselves. What Christ appeared for in the moral-spiritual field for human-kind, namely, that in respect to the absolute soul, there is in the possession of such by each single individual, something so transcendent, so incapable of gradations (like life), that, to that extent, it places all beings on a common level, utterly regardless of the distinctions of intellect, virtue, station, or any height or lowliness whatever—is tallied in like manner, in this other field, by democracy's rule that men, the nation, as a common aggregate of living identities, affording in each a separate and complete subject for freedom, worldly thrift and happiness, and for a fair chance for growth, and for protection in citizenship, etc., must, to the political extent of the suffrage or vote, if no further, be placed, in each and in the whole, on one broad, primary, universal, common platform.

The purpose is not altogether direct; perhaps it is more indirect. For it is not that democracy is of exhaustive account in itself. Perhaps, indeed, it is (like Nature), of no account in

itself. It is that, as we see, it is the best, perhaps only, fit and full means, formulator, general caller-forth, trainer, for the million, not for grand material personalities only, but for immortal souls. To be a voter with the rest is not so much; and this, like every institute, will have its imperfections. But to become an enfranchised man, and now, impediments removed, to stand and start without humiliation, and equal with the rest; to commence, or have the road cleared to commence, the grand experiment of development, whose end (perhaps requiring several generations), may be the forming of a full-grown man or woman—that is something. To ballast the State is also secured, and in our times is to be secured, in no other way.

We do not (at any rate I do not), put it either on the ground that the People, the masses, even the best of them, are, in their latent or exhibited qualities, essentially sensible and good—nor on the ground of their rights; but that good or bad, rights or no rights, the democratic formula is the only safe and preservative one for coming times. We endow the masses with the suffrage for their own sake, no doubt; then, perhaps still more, from another point of view, for community's sake. Leaving the rest to the sentimentalists, we present freedom as sufficient in its scientific aspect, cold as ice, reasoning, deductive, clear and passionless as crystal.

Democracy too is law, and of the strictest, amplest kind. Many suppose (and often in its own ranks the error), that it means a throwing aside of law, and running riot. But, briefly, it is the superior law, not alone that of physical force, the body, which, adding to, it supersedes with that of the spirit. Law is the unshakable order of the universe for ever; and the law over all, and law of laws, is the law of successions; that of the superior law, in time, gradually supplanting and overwhelming the inferior one. (While, for myself, I would cheerfully agree—first covenanting that the formative tendencies shall be administered in favour, or at least not against it, and that this reservation be closely construed—that until the individual or community show due signs, or be so minor and fractional as not to endanger the State, the condition of authoritative tutelage may continue, and self-government must abide its time.) Nor is the esthetic point, always an important one, without fascination for highest aiming souls. The common ambition strains for elevations, to become some privileged exclusive. The master sees greatness and health in being part of the mass; nothing will do as well as common ground. Would you have in

yourself the divine, vast, general law? Then merge yourself in it.

And, topping democracy, this most alluring *recueil*, that it alone can bind, and ever seeks to bind, all nations, all men, of however various and distant lands, into a brotherhood, a family. It is the old, yet ever-modern dream of earth, out of her eldest and her youngest, her fond philosophers and poets. Not that half only, individualism, which isolates. There is another half, which is adhesiveness or love, that fuses, ties, and aggregates, making the races comrades, and fraternising all. Both are to be vitalised by religion (sole worthiest elevator of man or State), breathing into the proud, material tissues, the breath of life. For I say at the core of democracy, finally, is the religious element. All the religions, old and new, are there. Nor may the scheme step forth, clothed in resplendent beauty and command, till these, bearing the best, the latest fruit, the spiritual, shall fully appear.

A portion of our pages we might indite with reference towards Europe, especially the British part of it, more than our own land, perhaps not absolutely needed for the home reader. But the whole question hangs together, and fastens and links all peoples. The liberalist of to-day has this advantage over antique or medieval times, that his doctrine seeks not only to individualise but to universalise. The great word *Solidarity* has arisen. Of all dangers to a nation, as things exist in our day, there can be no greater one than having certain portions of the people set off from the rest by a line drawn—they not privileged as others, but degraded, humiliated, made of no account. Much quackery teems, of course, even on democracy's side, yet does not really affect the orbic quality of the matter. To work in, if we may so term it, and justify God, His divine aggregate, the People (or, the veritable horned and sharp-tailed Devil, *His* aggregate, if there be who convulsively insist upon it)—this, I say, is what democracy is for; and this is what our America means, and is doing—may I not say, has done? If not, she means nothing more, and does nothing more, than any other land. And as, by virtue of its cosmical, antiseptic power, Nature's stomach is fully strong enough not only to digest the morbid matter always presented, not to be turned aside, and perhaps, indeed, intuitively gravitating thither—but even to change such contributions into nutriment for highest use and life—so American democracy's. That is the lesson we, these days, send over to European lands by every western breeze.

And truly, whatever may be said, in the way of abstract argument, for or against the theory of a wider democratising of institutions in any civilised country, much trouble might well be saved to all European lands by recognising this palpable fact (for a palpable fact it is), that some form of such democratising is about the only resource now left. *That*, or chronic dissatisfaction continued, mutterings which grow annually louder and louder, till, in due course, and pretty swiftly in most cases, the inevitable crisis, crash, dynastic ruin. Anything worthy to be called statesmanship in the Old World, I should say, among the advanced students, adepts, or men of any brains, does not debate to-day whether to hold on, attempting to learn back and monarchic, or to look forward and democratise—but *how*, and in what degree and part, most prudently to democratise.

The eager and often inconsiderate appeals of reformers and revolutionists are indispensable, to counterbalance the inertness and fossilism making so large a part of human institutions. The latter will always take care of themselves—the danger being that they rapidly tend to ossify us. The former is to be treated with indulgence, and even with respect. As circulation to air, so is agitation and a plentiful degree of speculative licence to political and moral sanity. Indirectly, but surely, goodness, virtue, law (of the very best), follow freedom. These, to democracy, are what the keel is to the ship, or saltness to the ocean.

The true gravitation-hold of liberalism in the United States will be a more universal ownership of property, general homesteads, general comfort—a vast, inter-twining reticulation of wealth. As the human frame, or, indeed, any object in this manifold universe, is best kept together by the simple miracle of its own cohesion, and the necessity, exercise, and profit thereof, so a great and varied nationality, occupying millions of square miles, were firmest held and knit by the principle of the safety and endurance of the aggregate of its middling property owners. So that, from another point of view, ungracious as it may sound, and a paradox after what we have been saying, democracy looks with suspicious, ill-satisfied eye upon the very poor, the ignorant, and on those out of business. She asks for men and women with occupations, well-off, owners of houses and acres, and with cash in the bank—and with some cravings for literature, too; and must have them, and hastens to make them. Luckily, the seed is already well-sown, and has taken ineradicable root.¹

¹ For fear of mistake, I may as well distinctly specify, as cheerfully included in the model and standard of these Vistas, a practical, stirring,

Huge and mighty are our days, our republican lands—and most in their rapid shiftings, their changes, all in the interest of the cause. As I write this particular passage (November, 1868), the din of disputation rages around me. Amid the temper of the parties, vital the pending questions. Congress convenes; the president sends his message; reconstruction is still in abeyance; the nomination and the contest for the twenty-first Presidentiad draw close, with loudest threat and bustle. Of these, and all the like of these, the eventuations I know not; but well I know that behind them, and whatever their eventuations, the vital things remain safe and certain, and all the needed work goes on. Time, with soon or later superciliousness, disposes of Presidents, Congressmen, party platforms, and such. Anon, it clears the stage of each and any mortal sord that thinks itself so potent to its day; and at and after which (with precious, golden exceptions once or twice in a century), all that relates to its potency is flung to moulder in a burial-vault, and no one bothers himself the least bit about it afterwards. But the People ever remain, tendencies continue, and all the idiocratic transfers in unbroken chain go on.

In a few years the dominion heart of America will be far inland, toward the West. Our future national capital may not be where the present one is. It is possible, nay likely, that in less than fifty years, it will migrate a thousand or two miles, will be re-founded, and everything belonging to it made on a different plan, original, far more superb. The main social, political, spine-character of the States will probably run along the Ohio, Missouri and Mississippi rivers, and west and north of them, including Canada. Those regions, with the group of powerful brothers toward the Pacific (destined to the mastership of that sea and its countless paradises of islands), will compact and settle the traits of America, with all the old retained, but more expanded, grafted on newer, harder, purely native stock. A giant growth, composite from the rest, getting their contribution,

worldly, money-making, even materialistic character. It is undeniable that our farms, stores, offices, dry-goods, coal and groceries, enginery, cash-accounts, trades, earnings, markets, etc., should be attended to in earnest, and actively pursued, just as if they had a real and permanent existence. I perceive clearly that the extreme business energy, and this almost maniacal appetite for wealth prevalent in the United States, are parts of amelioration and progress, indispensably needed to prepare the very results I demand. My theory includes riches, and the getting of riches, and the amplest products, power, activity, inventions, movements, etc. Upon them, as upon substrata, I raise the edifice designed in these Vistas.

absorbing it, to make it more illustrious. From the north, intellect, the sun of things, also the idea of unswayable justice, anchor amid the last, the wildest tempests. From the south the living soul, the animus of good and bad, haughtily admitting no demonstration but its own. While from the west itself comes solid personality, with blood and brawn, and the deep quality of all-accepting fusion.

Political democracy, as it exists and practically works in America, with all its threatening evils, supplies a training-school for making first-class men. It is life's gymnasium, not of good only, but of all. We try often, though we fall back often. A brave delight, fit for freedom's athletes, fills these arenas, and fully satisfies, out of the action in them, irrespective of success. Whatever we do not attain, we at any rate attain the experiences of the fight, the hardening of the strong campaign, and throb with currents of attempt at least. Time is ample. Let the victors come after us. Not for nothing does evil play its part among us. Judging from the main portions of the history of the world, so far, justice is always in jeopardy, peace walks amid hourly pitfalls, and of slavery, misery, meanness, the craft of tyrants and the credulity of the populace, in some of their protean forms, no voice can at any time say, They are not. The clouds break a little, and the sun shines out—but soon and certain the lowering darkness falls again, as if to last for ever. Yet is there an immortal courage and prophecy in every sane soul that cannot, must not, under any circumstances, capitulate. *Vive*, the attack—the perennial assault! *Vive*, the unpopular cause—the spirit that audaciously aims—the never-abandoned efforts, pursued the same amid opposing proofs and precedents.

Once, before the war (alas! I dare not say how many times the mood has come!) I, too, was filled with doubt and gloom. A foreigner, an acute and good man, had impressively said to me, that day—putting in form, indeed, my own observations: "I have travelled much in the United States, and watched their politicians, and listened to the speeches of the candidates, and read the journals, and gone into the public-houses, and heard the unguarded talk of men. And I have found your vaunted America honeycombed from top to toe with infidelity, even to itself and its own programme. I have marked the brazen hell-facts of secession and slavery gazing defiantly from all the windows and doorways. I have everywhere found, primarily, thieves and scalliwags arranging the nominations to offices, and sometimes filling the offices themselves. I have

found the north just as full of bad stuff as the south. Of the holders of public office in the Nation or the States or their municipalities, I have found that not one in a hundred has been chosen by any spontaneous selection of the outsiders, the people, but all have been nominated and put through by state or large caucuses of the politicians, and have got in by corrupt rings and electioneering, not capacity or desert. I have noticed how the millions of sturdy farmers and mechanics are thus the helpless supple-jacks of comparatively few politicians. And I have noticed more and more, the alarming spectacle of parties usurping the government, and openly and shamelessly wielding it for party purposes."

Sad, serious, deep truths. Yet are there other, still deeper, amply confronting, dominating truths. Over those politicians and great and little rings, and over all their insolence and wiles, and over the powerfulest parties, looms a power, too sluggish maybe, but ever holding decisions and decrees in hand, ready, with stern process, to execute them as soon as plainly needed—and at times, indeed, summarily crushing to atoms the mightiest parties, even in the hour of their pride.

In saner hours far different are the amounts of these things from what, at first sight, they appear. Though it is no doubt important who is elected governor, mayor, or legislator (and full of dismay when incompetent or vile ones get elected, as they sometimes do), there are other, quieter contingencies, infinitely more important. Shams, etc., will always be the show, like ocean's scum; enough, in waters deep and clear make up the rest. Enough, that while the piled embroidered shoddy gaud and fraud spreads to the superficial eye, the hidden warp and weft are genuine, and will wear for ever. Enough, in short, that the race, the land which could raise such as the late rebellion, could also put it down.

The average man of a land at last only is important. He, in these States, remains immortal owner and boss, deriving good uses, somehow, out of any sort of servant in office, even the basest (certain universal requisites, and their settled regularity and protection, being first secured); a nation like ours, in a sort of geological formation state, trying continually new experiments, choosing new delegations, is not served by the best men only, but sometimes more by those that provoke it—by the combats they arouse. Thus national rage, fury, discussion, etc., better than content. Thus, also, the warning signals, invaluable for after times.

What is more dramatic than the spectacle we have seen repeated, and doubtless long shall see—the popular judgment taking the successful candidates on trial in the offices—standing off, as it were, and observing them and their doings for a while, and always giving, finally, the fit, exactly due reward? I think, after all, the sublimest part of political history, and its culmination, is currently issuing from the American people. I know nothing grander, better exercise, better digestion, more positive proof of the past, the triumphant result of faith in human kind, than a well-contested American national election.

Then still the thought returns (like the thread-passage in overtures), giving the key and echo to these pages: When I pass to and fro, different latitudes, different seasons, beholding the crowds of the great cities, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, New Orleans, Baltimore—when I mix with these interminable swarms of alert, turbulent, good-natured, independent citizens, mechanics, clerks, young persons—at the idea of this mass of men, so fresh and free, so loving and so proud, a singular awe falls upon me. I feel, with dejection and amazement, that among our geniuses and talented writers or speakers, few or none have yet really spoken to this people, created a single image-making work for them, or absorbed the central spirit and the idiosyncrasies which are theirs—and which, thus, in highest ranges, so far remain entirely uncelebrated, unexpressed.

Dominion strong is the body's; dominion stronger is the mind's. What has filled, and fills to-day our intellect, our fancy, furnishing the standards therein, is yet foreign. The great poems, Shakespeare included, are poisonous to the idea of the pride and dignity of the common people, the life-blood of democracy. The models of our literature, as we get it from other lands, ultramarine, have had their birth in courts, and basked and grown in castle sunshine; all smells of princes' favours. Of workers of a certain sort, we have, indeed, plenty, contributing after their kind; many elegant, many learned, all complacent. But touched by the national test, or tried by the standards of democratic personality, they wither to ashes. I say I have not seen a single writer, artist, lecturer, or what not, that has confronted the voiceless but ever erect and active, pervading, underlying will and typic aspiration of the land, in a spirit kindred to itself. Do you call those genteel little creatures American poets? Do you term that perpetual, pistareen, paste-pot work, American art, American drama,

taste, verse? I think I hear, echoed as from some mountain-top afar, in the west, the scornful laugh of the Genius of these States.

Democracy, in silence, biding its time, ponders its own ideals, not of literature and art only—not of men only, but of women. The idea of the women of America (extricated from this daze, this fossil and unhealthy air which hangs about the word *lady*) developed, raised to become the robust equals, workers, and, it may be, even practical and political deciders with the men—greater than man, we may admit, through their divine maternity, always their towering, emblematical attribute—but great, at any rate, as man, in all departments, or, rather, capable of being so, soon as they realise it, and can bring themselves to give up toys and fictions, and launch forth, as men do, amid real, independent, stormy life.

Then, as towards our thought's finale (and, in that, over-arching the true scholar's lesson), we have to say there can be no complete or typical presentation of democracy in the aggregate, or anything like it, at this day, because its doctrines will only be effectually incarnated in any one branch, when, in all, their spirit is at the root and centre. Far, far, indeed, stretch, in distance, our Vistas! How much is still to be disentangled, freed! How long it takes to make this American world see that it is, in itself, the final authority and reliance.

Did you, too, O friend, suppose democracy was only for elections, for politics, and for a party name? I say democracy is only of use there that it may pass on and come to its flower and fruits in manners, in the highest forms of interaction between men, and their beliefs—in religion, literature, colleges, and schools—democracy in all public and private life, and in the army and navy.¹ I have intimated that, as a paramount scheme, it has yet few or no full realisers and believers. I do not see, either, that it owes any serious thanks to noted propagandists or champions, or has been essentially helped, though often harmed, by them. It has been and is carried on by all the moral forces, and by trade, finance, machinery, intercommunications, and, in fact, by all the developments of history, and can no more be stopped than the tides, or the earth in its orbit. Doubtless, also,

¹ The whole present system of the officering and *personnel* of the army and navy of these States, and the spirit and letter of their trebly-aristocratic rules and regulations, is a monstrous exotic, a nuisance and revolt, and belong here just as much as orders of nobility, or the Pope's council of cardinals. I say if the present theory of our army and navy is sensible and true, then the rest of America is an unmitigated fraud.

it resides, crude and latent, well down in the hearts of the fair average of the American-born people, mainly in the agricultural regions. But it is not yet, there or anywhere, the fully-received, the fervid, the absolute faith.

I submit, therefore, that the fruition of democracy, on aught like a grand scale, resides altogether in the future. As, under any profound and comprehensive view of the gorgeous-composite feudal world, we see in it, through the long ages and cycles of ages, the results of a deep, integral, human and divine principle, or fountain, from which issued laws, ecclesia, manners, institutes, costumes, personalities, poems (hitherto unequalled), faithfully partaking of their source, and indeed only arising either to betoken it, or to furnish parts of that varied-flowing display, whose centre was one and absolute—so, long ages hence, shall the due historian or critic make at least an equal retrospect, an equal history for the democratic principle. It too must be adorned, credited with its results—then, when it, with imperial power, through amplest time, has dominated mankind—has been the source and test of all the moral, esthetic, social, political, and religious expressions and institutes of the civilised world—has begotten them in spirit and in form, and has carried them to its own unprecedented heights—has had (it is possible) monastics and ascetics, more numerous, more devout than the monks and priests of all previous creeds—has swayed the ages with a breadth and rectitude tallying Nature's own—has fashioned, systematised, and triumphantly finished and carried out, in its own interest, and with unparalleled success, a new earth and a new man.

Thus we presume to write, as it were, upon things that exist not, and travel by maps yet unmade, and a blank. But the throes of birth are upon us; and we have something of this advantage in seasons of strong formations, doubts, suspense—for then the afflatus of such themes haply may fall upon us, more or less; and then, hot from surrounding war and revolution, our speech, though without polished coherence, and a failure by the standard called criticism, comes forth, real at least as the lightnings.

And maybe we, these days, have, too, our own reward—(for there are yet some, in all lands, worthy to be so encouraged). Though not for us the joy of entering at the last the conquered city—not ours the chance ever to see with our own eyes the peerless power and splendid *éclat* of the democratic principle, arrived at meridian, filling the world with effulgence and majesty far

beyond those of past history's kings, or all dynastic sway—there is yet, to whoever is eligible among us, the prophetic vision, the joy of being tossed in the brave turmoil of the times—the promulgation and the path, obedient, lowly reverent to the voice, the gesture of the god, or holy ghost, which others see not, hear not—with the proud consciousness that amid whatever clouds, seductions, or heart-wearying postponements, we have never deserted, never despaired, never abandoned the faith.

So much contributed, to be coned well, to help prepare and brace our édifice, our planned Idea—we still proceed to give it in another of its aspects—perhaps the main, the high façade of all. For to democracy, the leveller, the unyielding principle of the average, surely joined another principle, equally unyielding, closely tracking the first, indispensable to it, opposite (as the sexes are opposite), and whose existence, confronting and ever modifying the other, often clashing, paradoxical, yet neither of highest avail without the other, plainly supplies to these grand cosmic politics of ours, and to the launched forth mortal dangers of republicanism, to-day, or any day, the counterpart and offset whereby Nature restrains the deadly original relentlessness of all her first-class laws. This second principle is individuality, the pride and centripetal isolation of a human being in himself—identity—personalism. Whatever the name, its acceptance and thorough infusions through the organisations of political commonalty now shooting Aurora-like about the world, are of utmost importance, as the principle itself is needed for very life's sake. It forms, in a sort, or is to form, the compensating balance-wheel of the successful working machinery of aggregate America.

And, if we think of it, what does civilisation itself rest upon—and what object has it, what its religions, arts, schools, etc., but rich, luxuriant, varied personalism? To that, all bends; and it is because toward such result democracy alone, on anything like Nature's scale, breaks up the limitless fallows of human-kind, and plants the seed, and gives fair play, that its claims now precede the rest. The literature, songs, esthetics, etc., of a country are of importance principally because they furnish the materials and suggestions of personality for the women and men of that country, and enforce them in a thousand effective ways.¹

¹ After the rest is satiated, all interest culminates in the field of persons, and never flags there. Accordingly in this field have the great poets and literatures signally toiled. They too, in all ages, all lands, have been creators, fashioning, making types of men and women, as Adam and Eve are made in the divine fable. Behold, shaped, bred by orientalism,

As the topmost claim of a strong consolidating of the nationality of these States is, that only by such powerful compaction can the separate States secure that full and free swing within their spheres, which is becoming to them, each after its kind, so will individuality, and unimpeded branchings, flourish best under imperial republican forms.

Assuming Democracy to be at present in its embryo condition, and that the only large and satisfactory justification of it resides in the future, mainly through the copious production of perfect characters among the people, and through the advent of a sang and pervading religiousness, it is with regard to the atmosphere and spaciousness fit for such characters, and of certain nutriment and cartoon-draftings proper for them, and indicating them for New World purposes, that I continue the present statement—an exploration, as of new ground, wherein, like other primitive surveyors, I must do the best I can, leaving it to those who come after me to do much better. (The service, in fact, if any, must be to break a sort of first path or track, no matter how rude and ungeometrical)

We have frequently printed the word Democracy. Yet I cannot too often repeat that it is a word the real gist of which still sleeps, quite unawakened, notwithstanding the resonance and the many angry tempests out of which its syllables have come, from pen or tongue. It is a great word, whose history, I suppose, remains unwritten, because that history has yet to be enacted. It is, in some sort, younger brother of another great and often-used word, Nature, whose history also waits

feudalism, through their long growth and culmination, and breeding back in return—(when shall we have an equal series, typical of democracy?)—behold, commencing in primal Asia (apparently formulated, in what beginning we know, in the gods of the mythologies, and coming down thence), a few samples out of the countless product, bequeathed to the moderns, bequeathed to America as studies. For the men, Yudishtira, Rama, Arjuna, Solomon, most of the Old and New Testament characters; Achilles, Ulysses, Theseus, Prometheus, Hercules, Aeneas, Plutarch's heroes; the Merlin of Celtic bards; the Cid, Arthur and his knights, Siegfried and Hagen in the Nibelungen; Roland and Oliver; Roustam in the Shah-Nemah; and so on to Milton's Satan, Cervantes' Don Quixote, Shakespeare's Hamlet, Richard II., Lear, Marc Antony, etc., and the modern Faust. These, I say, are models, combined, adjusted to other standards than America's, but of priceless value to her and hers.

Among women the goddesses of the Egyptian, Indian, and Greek mythologies, certain Bible characters, especially the Holy Mother; Cleopatra, Penelope; the portraits of Brunhilde and Chriemhilde in the Nibelungen, Oriana, Una, etc.; the modern Consuelo, Walter Scott's Jeanie and Effie Deans, etc., etc. (Yet women portrayed or outlined at her best, or as perfect human mother, does not hitherto, it seems to me, fully appear in literature.)

unwritten. As I perceive, the tendencies of our day, in the States (and I entirely respect them), are toward those vast and sweeping movements, influences, moral and physical, community, now and always current over the planet, on the scale of the impulses of the elements. Then it is also good to reduce the whole matter to the consideration of a single self, a man, a woman, on permanent grounds. Even for the treatment of the universal, in politics, metaphysics, or anything, sooner or later we come down to one single, solitary soul.

* There is, in sanest hours, a consciousness, a thought that rises, independent, lifted out from all else, calm, like the stars, shining eternal. This is the thought of identity—yours for you, whoever you are, as mine for me. Miracle of miracles, beyond statement, most spiritual and vaguest of earth's dreams, yet hardest basic fact, and only entrance to all facts. In such devout hours, in the midst of the significant wonders of heaven and earth (significant only because of the Me in the centre), creeds, conventions, fall away and become of no account before this simple idea. Under the luminousness of real vision, it alone takes possession, takes value. Like the shadowy dwarf in the fable, once liberated and looked upon, it expands over the whole earth, and spreads to the roof of heaven.

The quality of BEING, in the object's self, according to its own central idea and purpose, and of growing therefrom and thereto—not criticism by other standards, and adjustments thereto—is the lesson of Nature. True, the full man wisely gathers, culls, absorbs; but if, engaged disproportionately in that, he slight or overlays the precious idiosyncrasy and special nativity and intention that he is, the man's self, the main thing, is a failure, however wide his general cultivation. Thus, in our times, refinement and delicatessen are not only attended to sufficiently, but threaten to eat us up, like a cancer. Already, the democratic genius watches, ill pleased, these tendencies. Provision for a little healthy rudeness, savage virtue, justification of what one has in one's self, whatever it is, is demanded. Negative qualities, even deficiencies, would be a relief. Singleness and normal simplicity and separation, amid this more and more complex, more and more artificialised state of society—how pensively we yearn for them! how we would welcome their return!

In some such direction, then—at any rate enough to preserve the balance—we feel called upon to throw what weight we can, not for absolute reasons, but current ones. To prune, gather,

trim, conform, and ever cram and stuff, and be genteel and proper, is the pressure of our days. While aware that much can be said even in behalf of all this, we perceive that we have not now to consider the question of what is demanded to serve a half-starved and barbarous nation, or set of nations, but what is most applicable, most pertinent, for numerous congeries of conventional, over-corpulent societies, already becoming stifled and rotten with flatulent, infidelistic literature, and polite conformity and art. In addition to established sciences, we suggest a science as it were of healthy average personalism, on original universal grounds, the object of which should be to raise up and supply through the States a copious race of superb American men and women, cheerful, religious, ahead of any yet known.

America has yet morally and artistically originated nothing. She seems singularly unaware that the models of persons, books, manners, etc., appropriate for former conditions and for European lands, are but exiles and exotics here. No current of her life, as shown on the surfaces of what is authoritatively called her society, accepts or runs into social or esthetic democracy; but all the currents set squarely against it. Never, in the Old World, was thoroughly upholstered exterior appearance and show, mental and other, built entirely on the idea of caste, and on the sufficiency of mere outside acquisition—never were glibness, verbal intellect more the test, the emulation—more loftily elevated as head and sample—than they are on the surface of our republican States this day. The writers of a time hint the mottoes of its gods. The word of the modern, say these voices, is the word Culture.

We find ourselves abruptly in close quarters with the enemy. This word Culture, or what it has come to represent, involves, by contrast, our whole theme, and has been, indeed, the spur, urging us to engagement. Certain questions arise. As now taught, accepted and carried out, are not the processes of culture rapidly creating a class of supercilious infidels, who believe in nothing? Shall a man lose himself in countless masses of adjustments, and be so shaped with reference to this, that, and the other, that the simply good and healthy and brave parts of him are reduced and clipped away, like the bordering of box in a garden? You can cultivate corn and roses and orchards—but who shall cultivate the mountain peaks, the ocean, and the tumbling gorgeousness of the clouds? Lastly—is the readily-given reply that culture only seeks to help, systematise, and put

in attitude, the elements of fertility and power, a conclusive reply?

I do not so much object to the name, or word, but I should certainly insist, for the purposes of these States, on a radical change of category, in the distribution of precedence. I should demand a programme of culture, drawn out, not for a single class alone, or for the parlours or lecture-rooms, but with an eye to practical life, the west, the working-men, the facts of farms and jack-planes and engineers, and of the broad range of the women also of the middle and working strata, and with reference to the perfect equality of women, and of a grand and powerful motherhood. I should demand of this programme or theory a scope generous enough to include the widest human area. It must have for its spinal meaning the formation of a typical personality of character, eligible to the uses of the high average of men—and *not* restricted by conditions ineligible to the masses. The best culture will always be that of the manly and courageous instincts, and loving perceptions, and of self-respect—aiming to form, over this continent, an idiocracy of universalism, which, true child of America, will bring joy to its mother, returning to her in her own spirit, recruiting myriads of offspring, able, natural, perceptive, tolerant, devout believers in her, America, and with some definite instinct why and for what she has arisen, most vast, most formidable of historic births, and is, now and here, with wonderful step, journeying through Time.

The problem, as it seems to me, presented to the New World, is, under permanent law and order, and after preserving cohesion (ensemble-individuality), at all hazards, to vitalise man's free play of special Personalism, recognising in it something that calls ever more to be considered, fed, and adopted as the substratum for the best that belongs to us (government indeed is for it), including the new esthetics of our future.

To formulate beyond this present vagueness—to help line and put before us the species, or a specimen of the species, of the democratic ethnology of the future, is a work toward which the genius of our land, with peculiar encouragement, invites her well-wishers. Already certain limnings, more or less grotesque, more or less fading and watery, have appeared. We too (repressing doubts and qualms) will try our hand.

Attempting, then, however crudely, a basic model or portrait of personality for general use for the manliness of the States (and doubtless that is most useful which is most simple and comprehensive for all, and toned low enough), we should prepare the

canvas well beforehand. Parentage must consider itself in advance. (Will the time hasten when fatherhood and motherhood shall become a science—and the noblest science?) To our model, a clear-blooded, strong-fibred physique is indispensable; the questions of food, drink, air, exercise, assimilation, digestion, can never be intermitted. Out of these we descry a well-begotten selfhood—in youth, fresh, ardent, emotional, aspiring, full of adventure; at maturity, brave, perceptive, under control, neither too talkative nor too reticent, neither flippant nor sombre; of the bodily figure, the movements easy, the complexion showing the best blood, somewhat flushed, breast expanded, an erect attitude, a voice whose sound outvies music, eyes of calm and steady gaze, yet capable also of flashing—and a general presence that holds its own in the company of the highest. (For it is native personality, and that alone, that endows a man to stand before presidents or generals, or in any distinguished collection, with *aplomb*—and *not* culture, or any knowledge or intellect whatever.)

With regard to the mental-educational part of our model, enlargement of intellect, stores of cephalic knowledge, etc., the concentration thitherward of all the customs of our age, especially in America, is so overweening, and provides so fully for that part, that, important and necessary as it is, it really needs nothing from us here—except, indeed, a phrase of warning and restraint. Manners, costumes, too, though important, we need not dwell upon here. Like beauty, grace of motion, etc., they are results. Causes, original things, being attended to, the right manners unerringly follow. Much is said, among artists, of “the grand style,” as if it were a thing by itself. When a man, artist or whoever, has health, pride, acuteness, noble aspirations, he has the motive-elements of the grandest style. The rest is but manipulation (yet that is no small matter).

Leaving still unspecified several sterling parts of any model fit for the future personality of America, I must not fail, again and ever, to pronounce myself on one, probably the least attended to in modern times—a hiatus, indeed, threatening its gloomiest consequences after us. I mean the simple, unsophisticated Conscience, the primary moral element. If I were asked to specify in what quarter be the grounds of darkest dread, respecting the America of our hopes, I should have to point to this particular. I should demand the invariable application to individuality, this day and any day, of that old ever-true plumb-rule of persons, eras, nations. Our triumphant modern civilisee,

with his all-schooling and his wondrous appliances, will still show himself but an amputation while this deficiency remains. Beyond (assuming a more hopeful tone), the vertebration of the manly and womanly personalism of our western world can only be, and is, indeed, to be (I hope), its all-penetrating Religiousness.

The ripeness of Religion is doubtless to be looked for in this field of individuality, and is a result that no organization or church can ever achieve. As history is poorly retained by what the technists call history, and is not given out from their pages, except the learner has in himself the sense of the well-wrapped, never yet written, perhaps impossible to be written, history—so Religion, although casually arrested, and, after a fashion, preserved in the churches and creeds, does not depend at all upon them, but is a part of the identified soul, which, when greatest, knows not bibles in the old way, but in new ways—the identified soul, which can really confront Religion when it extricates itself entirely from the churches, and not before.

Personalism fuses this, and favours it. I should say, indeed, that only in the perfect uncontamination and solitariness of individuality may the spirituality of religion positively come forth at all. Only here, and on such terms, the meditation, the devout ecstasy, the soaring flight. Only here, communion with the mysteries, the eternal problems, whence? whither? Alone, and identity, and the mood—and the soul emerges, and all statements, churches, sermons, melt away like vapour. Alone, and silent thought and awe, and aspiration—and then the interior consciousness, like a hitherto unseen inscription, in magic ink, beams out its wondrous lines to the sense. Bibles may convey, and priests expound, but it is exclusively for the noiseless operation of one's isolated Self, to enter the pure ether of veneration, reach the divine levels, and commune with the unutterable.

To practically enter into politics is an important part of American personalism. To every young man, north and south, earnestly studying these things, I should here, as an offset to what I have said in former pages, now also say, that maybe to views of very large scope, after all, perhaps the political (perhaps the literary and sociological) America goes best about its development its own way—sometimes, to temporary sight, appalling enough. It is the fashion among dilettanti and fops (perhaps I myself am not guiltless), to decry the whole formulation of the active politics of America, as beyond redemption, and to be carefully kept away from. See you that you do not

fall into this error. America, it may be, is doing very well upon the whole, notwithstanding these antics of the parties and their leaders, these half-brained nominees, and many ignorant ballots, and many elected failures and blatherers. It is the dilettanti, and all who shirk their duty, who are not doing well. As for you, I advise you to enter more strongly yet into politics. I advise every young man to do so. Always inform yourself; always do the best you can; always vote. Disengage yourself from parties. They have been useful, and to some extent remain so; but the floating, uncommitted electors, farmers, clerks, mechanics, the masters of parties—watching aloof, inclining victory this side or that side—such are the ones most needed, present and future. For America, if eligible at all to downfall and ruin, is eligible within herself, not without; for I see clearly that the combined foreign world could not beat her down. But these savage, wolfish parties alarm me. Owning no law but their own will, more and more combative, less and less tolerant of the idea of ensemble and of equal brotherhood, the perfect equality of the States, the ever-overarching American ideas, it behooves you to convey yourself implicitly to no party, nor submit blindly to their dictators, but steadily hold yourself judge and master over all of them.

So much (hastily tossed together, and leaving far more unsaid), for an ideal, or intimations of an ideal, toward American manhood. But the other sex, in our land, requires at least a basis of suggestion.

I have seen a young American woman, one of a large family of daughters, who, some years since, migrated from her meagre country home to one of the northern cities, to gain her own support. She soon became an expert seamstress, but finding the employment too confining for health and comfort, she went boldly to work for others, to housekeep, cook, clean, etc. After trying several places, she fell upon one where she was suited. She has told me that she finds nothing degrading in her position; it is not inconsistent with personal dignity, self-respect, and the respect of others. She confers benefits and receives them. She has good health; her presence itself is healthy and bracing; her character is unstained; she has made herself understood, and preserves her independence, and has been able to help her parents, and educate and get places for her sisters; and her course of life is not without opportunities for mental improvement, and of much quiet, uncosting happiness and love.

I have seen another woman who, from taste and necessity

conjoined, has gone into practical affairs, carries on a mechanical business, partly works at it herself, dashes out more and more into real hardy life, is not abashed by the coarseness of the contact, knows how to be firm and silent at the same time, holds her own with unvarying coolness and decorum, and will compare, any day, with superior carpenters, farmers, and even boatmen and drivers. For all that, she has not lost the charm of the womanly nature, but preserves and bears it fully, though through such rugged presentation.

• Then there is the wife of a mechanic, mother of two children, a woman of merely passable English education, but of fine wit, with all her sex's grace and intuitions, who exhibits, indeed, such a noble female personality, that I am fain to record it here. Never abnegating her own proper independence, but always genially preserving it, and what belongs to it—cooking, washing, child-nursing, house-tending—she beams sunshine out of all these duties, and makes them illustrious. Physiologically sweet and sound, loving work, practical, she yet knows that there are intervals, however few, devoted to recreation, music, leisure, hospitality—and affords such intervals. Whatever she does, and wherever she is, that charm, that indescribable perfume of genuine womanhood attends her, goes with her, exhales from her, which belongs of right to all the sex, and is, or ought to be, the invariable atmosphere and common aureola of old as well as young.

My dear mother once described to me a resplendent person, down on Long Island, whom she knew in early days. She was known by the name of the Peacemaker. She was well toward eighty years old, of happy and sunny temperament, had always lived on a farm, and was very neighbourly, sensible and discreet, an invariable and welcomed favourite, especially with young married women. She had numerous children and grandchildren. She was uneducated, but possessed a native dignity. She had come to be a tacitly agreed upon domestic regulator, judge, settler of difficulties, shepherdess, the reconciler in the land. She was a sight to draw near and look upon, with her large figure, her profuse snow-white hair (uncoiled by any head-dress or cap), dark eyes, clear complexion, sweet breath, and peculiar personal magnetism.

The foregoing portraits, I admit, are frightfully out of line from these imported models of womanly personality—the stock feminine characters of the current novelists, or of the foreign court poems (Ophelias, Enids, princesses, or ladies of one thing

or another), which fill the envying dreams of so many poor girls, and are accepted by our men, too, as supreme ideals of feminine excellence to be sought after. But I present mine just for a change.

Then there are mutterings (we will not now stop to heed them here, but they must be heeded), of something more revolutionary. The day is coming when the deep questions of woman's entrance amid the arenas of practical life, politics, the suffrage, etc., will not only be argued all around us, but may be put to decision, and real experiment.

Of course, in these States, for both man and woman, we must entirely recast the types of highest personality from what the oriental, feudal, ecclesiastical worlds bequeath us, and which yet possess the imaginative and esthetic fields of the United States, pictorial and melodramatic, not without use as studies, but making sad work, and forming a strange anachronism upon the scenes and exigencies around us. Of course, the old undying elements remain. The task is, to successfully adjust them to new combinations, our own days. Nor is this so incredible. I can conceive a community, to-day and here, in which, on a sufficient scale, the perfect personalities, without noise meet; say in some pleasant western settlement or town, where a couple of hundred best men and women, of ordinary worldly status, have by luck been drawn together, with nothing extra of genius or wealth, but virtuous, chaste, industrious, cheerful, resolute, friendly and devout. I can conceive such a community organised in running order, powers judiciously delegated—farming, building, trade, courts, mails, schools, elections, all attended to, and then the rest of life, the main thing, freely branching and blossoming in each individual, and bearing golden fruit. I can see there, in every young and old man, after his kind, and in every woman after hers, a true personality, developed, exercised proportionately in body, mind, and spirit. I can imagine this case as one not necessarily rare or difficult, but in buoyant accordance with the municipal and general requirements of our times. And I can realise in it the culmination of something better than any stereotyped *éclat* of history or poems. Perhaps unsung, undramatised, unput in essays or biographies—perhaps even some such community already exists, in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, or somewhere, practically fulfilling itself, and thus outvying, in cheapest vulgar life, all that has been hitherto shown in best ideal pictures.

In short; and to sum up, America, betaking herself to forma-

tive action (as it is about time for more solid achievement, and less windy promise), must, for her purposes, cease to recognise a theory of character grown of feudal aristocracy, or formed by merely literary standards, or from any ultramarine full-dress formulas of culture, polish, caste, etc., and must sternly promulgate her own new standard, yet old enough, and accepting the old, the perennial elements, and combining them into groups, unities, appropriate to the modern, the democratic, the west, and to the practical occasions and needs of our own cities, and of the agricultural regions. Ever the most precious in the communion. Ever the fresh breeze of field, or hill or lake, is more than any palpitation of fans, though of ivory, and redolent with perfume; and the air is more than the costliest perfumes.

And now, for fear of mistake, we may not intermit to beg our absolution from all that genuinely is, or goes along with, even Culture. Pardon us, venerable shade! if we have seemed to speak lightly of your office. The whole civilisation of the earth, we know, is yours, with all the glory and the light thereof. It is, indeed, in your own spirit, and seeking to tally the loftiest teachings of it, that we aim these poor utterances. For you, too, mighty minister! know that there is something greater than you, namely, the fresh, eternal qualities of Being. From them, and by them, as you, at your best, we too evoke the last, the needed help, to vitalise our country and our days. Thus we pronounce not so much against the principle of culture: we only supervise it, and promulgate along with it, as deep, perhaps a deeper, principle. As we have shown the New World including in itself the all-levelling aggregate of democracy, we show it also including the all-varied, all-permitting, all-free theorem of individuality, and erecting therefor a lofty and hitherto unoccupied framework or platform, broad enough for all, eligible to every farmer and mechanic—to the female equally with the male—a towering selfhood, not physically perfect only—not satisfied with the mere mind's and learning's stores, but religious, possessing the idea of the infinite (rudder and compass sure amid this troublous voyage, o'er darkest, wildest wave, through stormiest wind, of man's or nation's progress)—realising, above the rest, that known humanity, in deepest sense, is fair adhesion to itself, for purposes beyond—and that, finally, the personality of mortal life is most important with reference to the immortal, the unknown, the spiritual, the only permanently real, which as the ocean waits for and receives the rivers, waits for us each and all.

Much is there, yet, demanding line and outline in our Vistas, not only on these topics, but others quite unwritten. Indeed, we could talk the matter, and expand it, through lifetime. But it is necessary to return to our original premises. In view of them, we have again pointedly to confess that all the objective grandeurs of the world, for highest purposes, yield themselves up, and depend on mentality alone. Here, and here only, all balances, all rests. For the mind, which alone builds the permanent edifice, haughtily builds it to itself. By it, with what follows it, are conveyed to mortal sense the culminations of the materialistic, the known, and a prophecy of the unknown. To take expression, to incarnate, to endow a literature with grand and archetypal models—to fill with pride and love the utmost capacity, and to achieve spiritual meanings, and suggest the future—these, and these only, satisfy the soul. We must not say one word against real materials; but the wise know that they do not become real till touched by emotions, the mind. Did we call the latter imponderable? Ah, let us rather proclaim that the slightest song-tune, the countless ephemera of passions aroused by orators and tale-tellers, are more dense, more weighty than the engines there in the great factories, or the granite blocks in their foundations.

Approaching thus the momentous spaces, and considering with reference to a new and greater personalism, the needs and possibilities of American imaginative literature, through the medium-light of what we have already broached, it will at once be appreciated that a vast gulf of difference separates the present accepted condition of these spaces, inclusive of what is floating in them, from any condition adjusted to, or fit for, the world, the America, there sought to be indicated, and the copious races of complete men and women, along these Vistas crudely outlined. It is, in some sort, no less a difference than lies between that long-continued nebular state and vagueness of the astronomical worlds, compared with the subsequent state, the definitely-formed worlds themselves, duly compacted, clustering in systems, hung up there, chandeliers of the universe, beholding and mutually lit by each other's lights, serving for ground of all substantial foothold, all vulgar uses—yet serving still more as an undying chain and echelon of spiritual proofs and shows. A boundless field to fill! A new creation, with needed orbic works launched forth, to revolve in free and lawful circuits—to move, self-poised, through the ether, and shine like heaven's own suns! With such, and nothing less, we suggest

that New World literature, fit to rise upon, cohere, and signalise in time, these States.

What, however, do we more definitely mean by New World literature? Are we not doing well enough here already? Are not the United States this day busily using, working, more printer's type, more presses, than any other country? uttering and absorbing more publications than any other? Do not our publishers fatten quicker and deeper? (helping themselves, under shelter of a delusive and sneaking law, or rather absence of law, to most of their forage, poetical, pictorial, historical, romantic, even comic, without money and without price—and fiercely resisting the timidest proposal to pay for it). Many will come under this delusion—but my purpose is to dispel it. I say that a nation may hold and circulate rivers and oceans of very readable print, journals, magazines, novels, library-books, "poetry," etc.—such as the States to-day possess and circulate—of unquestionable aid and value—hundreds of new volumes annually composed and brought out here, respectable enough, indeed unsurpassed in smartness and erudition—with further hundreds, or rather millions (as by free forage or theft aforementioned), also thrown into the market—and yet, all the while, the said nation, land, strictly speaking, may possess no literature at all.

Repeating our inquiry, what, then, do we mean by real literature? especially the democratic literature of the future? Hard questions to meet. The clues are inferential, and turn us to the past. At best, we can only offer suggestions, comparisons, circuits.

It must still be reiterated, as, for the purpose of these memoranda, the deep lesson of history and time, that all else in the contributions of a nation or age, through its politics, materials, heroic personalities, military *éclat*, etc., remains crude, and defers, in any close and thorough-going estimate, until vitalised by national, original archetypes in literature. They only put the nation in form, finally tell anything—prove, complete anything—perpetuate anything. Without doubt, some of the richest and most powerful and populous communities of the antique world, and some of the grandest personalities and events, have, to after and present times, left themselves entirely unbeckathed. Doubtless, greater than any that have come down to us, were among those lands, heroisms, persons, that have not come down to us at all, even by name, date, or location. Others have arrived safely, as from voyages over wide, century-stretch-

ing seas. The little ships, the miracles that have buoyed them, and by incredible chances safely conveyed them (or the best of them, their meaning and essence) over long wastes, darkness, lethargy, ignorance, etc., have been a few inscriptions—a few immortal compositions, small in size, yet compassing what measureless values of reminiscence, contemporary portraitures, manners, idioms and beliefs, with deepest inference, hint and thought, to tie and touch for ever the old, new body, and the old, new soul! These! and still these! bearing the freight so dear—dearer than pride—dearer than love. All the best experience of humanity, folded, saved, freighted to us here. Some of these tiny ships we call Old and New Testament, Homer, Eschylus, Plato, Juvenal, etc. Precious minims! I think, if we were forced to choose, rather than have you, and the likes of you, and what belongs to, and has grown of you, blotted out and gone, we could better afford, appalling as that would be, to lose all actual ships, this day fastened by wharf, or floating on wave, and see them, with all their cargoes, scuttled and sent to the bottom.

Gathered by geniuses of city, race or age, and put by them in highest of art's forms, namely, the literary form, the peculiar combinations and the outshows of that city, age, or race, its particular modes of the universal attributes and passions, its faiths, heroes, lovers and gods, wars, traditions, struggles, crimes, emotions, joys (for the subtle spirit of these), having been passed on to us to illumine our own selfhood, and its experiences—what they supply, indispensable and highest, if taken away, nothing else in all the world's boundless store-houses could make up to us, or ever again return.

For us, along the great highways of time, those monuments stand—those forms of majesty and beauty. For us those beacons burn through all the nights. Unknown Egyptians, graving hieroglyphs; Hindus, with hymn and apothegm and endless epic; Hebrew prophet, with spirituality, as in flashes of lightning, conscience like red-hot iron, plaintive songs and screams of vengeance for tyrannies and enslavement; Christ, with bent head, brooding love and peace, like a dove; Greek, creating eternal shapes of physical and esthetic proportion! Roman, lord of satire, the sword, and the codex;—of the figures, some far off and veiled, others nearer and visible; Dante, stalking with lean form, nothing but fibre, not a grain of superfluous flesh; Angelo, and the great painters, architects, musicians; rich Shakespeare, luxuriant as the sun, artist and singer of

feudalism in its sunset, with all the gorgeous colours, owner thereof, and using them at will; and so to such as German Kant and Hegel, where they, though near us, have, over the ages, sit again, impassive, imperturbable, like the Egyptian gods. Of these, and the like of these, is it too much, indeed, to return to our favourite figure, and view them as orbs and systems of orbs, moving in free paths in the spaces of that other heaven, the cosmic intellect, the soul?

Ye powerful and resplendent ones! ye were, in your atmospheres, grown not for America, but rather for her foes, the feudal and the old—while our genius is democratic and modern. Yet could ye, indeed, but breathe your breath of life into our New World's nostrils—not to enslave us, as now, but, for our needs, to breed a spirit like your own—perhaps (dare we to say it?) to dominate, even destroy, what you yourselves have left! On your plane, and no less, but even higher and wider, must we mete and measure for to-day and here. I demand races of orbic hards, with unconditional, uncompromising sway. Come forth, sweet democratic despots of the west!

By points like these we, in reflection, token what we mean by any land's or people's genuine literature. And thus compared and tested, judging amid the influence of loftiest products only, what do our current copious fields of print, covering in manifold forms, the United States, better, for an analogy, present, than, as in certain regions of the sea, those spreading, undulating masses of squid, through which the whale swimming, with head half out, feeds?

Not but that doubtless our current so-called literature (like an endless supply of small coin) performs a certain service, and maybe too, the service needed for the time, the preparation-service, as children learn to spell. Everybody reads, and truly nearly everybody writes, either books, or for the magazines or journals. The matter has magnitude, too, after a sort. But is it really advancing? or, has it advanced for a long while? There is something impressive about the huge editions of the dailies and weeklies, the mountain-stacks of white paper piled in the press-vaults, and the proud, crashing, ten-cylinder presses, which I can stand and watch any time by the half hour. Then (though the States in the field of imagination present not a single first-class work, not a single great *litteratus*), the main objects, to amuse, to titillate, to pass away time, to circulate the news, and rumours of news, to rhyme, and read rhyme, are yet attained, and on a scale of infinity. To-day, in books, in

the rivalry of writers, especially novelists, success (so-called) is for him or her who strikes the mean flat average, the sensational appetite for stimulus, incident, persiflage, etc., and depicts, to the common calibre, sensual, exterior life. To such, or the luckiest of them, as we see, the audiences are limitless and profitable; but they cease presently. While this day, or any day, to workmen portraying interior or spiritual life, the audiences were limited, and often laggard—but they last for ever.

Compared with the past, our modern science soars, and our journals serve—but ideal and even ordinary romantic literature, does not, I think, substantially advance. Behold the prolific brood of the contemporary novel, magazine-tale, theatre-play, etc. The same endless thread of tangled and superlative love-story, inherited, apparently from the Amadis and Palmerins of the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries over there in Europe. The costumes and associations brought down to date, the seasoning hotter and more varied, the dragons and ogres left out—but the *thing*, I should say, has not advanced—is just as sensational, just as strained—remains about the same, nor more, nor less.

What is the reason our time, our lands, that we see no fresh local courage, sanity, of our own—the Mississippi, stalwart Western men, real mental and physical facts, Southerners, etc., in the body of our literature? especially the poetic part of it. But always, instead, a parcel of dandies and ennuyees, dapper little gentlemen from abroad, who flood us with their thin sentiment of parlours, parasols, piano-songs, tinkling rhymes, the five-hundredth importation—or whimpering and crying about something, chasing one aborted conceit after another, and for ever occupied in dyspeptic amours with dyspeptic women. While, current and novel, the grandest events and revolutions, and stormiest passions of history are crossing to-day with unparalleled rapidity and magnificence over the stages of our own and all the continents, offering new materials, opening new vistas, with largest needs, inviting the daring launching forth of conceptions in literature, inspired by them, soaring in highest regions, serving art in its highest (which is only the other name for serving God, and serving humanity), where is the man of letters, where is the book, with any nobler aim than to follow in the old track, repeat what has been said before—and, as its utmost triumph, sell well, and be erudite or elegant?

Mark the roads, the processes, through which these States have arrived, standing easy, henceforth ever-equal, ever-com-

pact, in their range to-day. European adventures? the most antique? Asiatic or African? old history—miracles—romances? Rather, our own unquestioned facts. They have a credible, blazing bright as fire. From the deeds and days of Columbus down to the present, and including the present—and especially the late Secession war—when I con them, I feel, every leaf like stopping to see if I have not made a mistake, and fallen on the splendid figments of some dream. But it is no dream. We stand, live, move, in the huge flow of our age's materialism—in its spirituality. We have had founded for us the most positive of lands. The founders have passed to other spheres—but what are these terrible duties they have left us?

Their politics the United States have, in my opinion, with all their faults, already substantially established, for good, on their own native, sound, long-vested principles, never to be overturned, offering a sure basis for all the rest. With that, their future religious forms, sociology, literature, teachers, schools, costumes, etc., are of course to make a compact whole, uniform, on tallying principles. For how can we remain, divided, contradicting ourselves, this way?¹ I say we can only attain harmony and stability by consulting ensemble and the ethic purports, and faithfully building upon them. For the New World, indeed, after two grand stages of preparation-strata, I perceive that now a third stage, being ready for (and without which the other two were useless), with unmistakable signs appears. The First stage was the planning and putting on record the political foundation rights of immense masses of people—indeed all people—in the organisation of republican National, State, and municipal governments, all constructed with reference to each, and each to all. This is the American programme, not for classes, but for universal man, and is embodied in the compacts of the Declaration of Independence, and, as it began and has now grown, with its amendments, the Federal Constitution—and in the State governments, with all their interiors, and with general suffrage; those having the sense not only of what is in themselves, but that their certain several things started, planted, hundreds of others in the same

¹ Note, to-day, an instructive, curious spectacle and conflict. Science (twin, in its fields, of Democracy in its)—Science, testing absolutely all thoughts, all works, has already burst well upon the world—a sun, mounting, most illuminating, most glorious—surely never again to set. But against it, deeply entrenched, holding possession, yet remains (not only through the churches and schools, but by imaginative literature, and unregenerate poetry), the fossil theology of the mythic-materialistic, superstitious, untaught and credulous, fable-loving, primitive ages of humanity.

direction duly arise and follow. The Second stage relates to material prosperity, wealth, produce, labour-saving machines, iron, cotton, local, State, and continental railways, intercommunication and trade with all lands, steamships, mining, general employment, organisation of great cities, cheap appliances for comfort, numberless technical schools, books, newspapers, a currency for money circulation, etc. The Third stage, rising out of the previous ones, to make them and all illustrious, I, now, for one, promulge, announcing a native expression-spirit, getting into form, adult, and through mentality, for these States, self-contained, different from others, more expansive, more rich and free, to be evidenced by original authors and poets to come, by American personalities, plenty of them, male and female, traversing the States, none excepted--and by native superb tableaux and growths of language, songs, operas, orations, lectures, architecture--and by a sublime and serious Religious Democracy sternly taking command, dissolving the old, sloughing off surfaces, and from its own interior and vital principles, reconstructing, democratising society.

For America, type of progress, and of essential faith in man, above all his errors and wickedness--few suspect how deep, how deep it really strikes. The world evidently supposes, and we have evidently supposed so too, that the States are merely to achieve the equal franchise, an elective government--to inaugurate the respectability of labour, and become a nation of practical operatives, law abiding, orderly, and well-off. Yes, those are indeed parts of the task of America; but they not only do not exhaust the progressive conception, but rather arise, teeming with it, as the mediums of deeper, higher progress. Daughter of a physical revolution--mother of the true revolutions, which are of the interior life, and of the arts. For so long as the spirit is not changed, any change of appearance is of no avail.

The old men, I remember as a boy, were always talking of American independence. What is independence? Freedom from all laws or bonds except those of one's own being, controlled by the universal ones. To lands, to man, to woman, what is there at last to each, but the inherent soul, nativity, idiosyncrasy, free, highest-poised, soaring its own flight, following out itself?

At present, these States, in their theology and social standards (of greater importance than their political institutions) are entirely held possession of by foreign lands. We see the sons and daughters of the New World, ignorant of its genius, not yet

inaugurating the native, the universal, and the near still importing the distant, the partial, and the dead. We see London, Paris, Italy—not original, superb, as where they belong—but second-hand here, where they do not belong. We see the shreds of Hebrews, Romans, Greeks; but where, on her own soil, do we see, in any faithful, highest, proud expression, America herself? I sometimes question whether she has a corner in her own house.

Not but that in one sense, and a very grand one, good theology, good art, or good literature, has certain features shared in common. The combination fraternises, ties the races—is, in many particulars, under laws applicable indifferently to all, irrespective of climate or date, and, from whatever source, appeals to emotions, pride, love, spirituality, common to human-kind. Nevertheless, they touch a man closest (perhaps only actually touch him), even in these, in their expression through autochthonic lights and shades, flavours, fondnesses, aversions, specific incidents, illustrations, out of his own rationality, geography, surroundings, antecedents, etc. The spirit and the form are one, and depend far more on association, identity, and place, than is supposed. Subtly interwoven with the materiality and personality of a land, a race—Teuton, Turk, Californian, or what not—there is always something—I can hardly tell what it is—history but describes the results of it—it is the same as the untellable look of some human faces. Nature, too, in her stolid forms, is full of it—but to most it is there a secret. Thus something is rooted in the invisible roots, the profoundest meanings of that place, race, or nationality; and to absorb and again effuse it, uttering words and products as from its midst, and carrying it into highest regions, is the work, or a main part of the work, of any country's true author, poet, historian, lecturer, and perhaps even priest and philosopher. Here, and here only, are the foundations for our really valuable and permanent verse, drama, etc.

But at present (judged by any higher scale than that which finds the chief ends of existence to be to feverishly make money during one-half of it, and by some "amusement," or perhaps foreign travel, flippantly kill time, the other half), and considered with reference to purposes of patriotism, health, a noble personality, religion, and the democratic adjustments, all these swarms of poems, literary magazines, dramatic plays, resultant so far from American intellect, and the formation of our best ideas, are useless and a mockery. They strengthen and nourish no

one, express nothing characteristic, give decision and purpose to no one, and suffice only the lowest level of vacant minds.

Of what is called the drama, or dramatic presentation in the United States, as now put forth at the theatres, I should say it deserves to be treated with the same gravity, and on a par with the questions of ornamental confectionery at public dinners, or the arrangement of curtains and hangings in a ball-room—nor more, nor less. Of the other, I will not insult the reader's intelligence (once really entering into the atmosphere of these Vistas), by supposing it necessary to show, in detail, why the copious dribble, either of our little or well-known rhymesters, does not fulfil, in any respect, the needs and august occasions of this land. America demands a poetry that is bold, modern, and all-surrounding and cosmical, as she is herself. It must in no respect ignore science or the modern, but inspire itself with science and the modern. It must bend its vision toward the future, more than the past. Like America, it must extricate itself from even the greatest models of the past, and, while courteous to them, must have entire faith in itself, and the products of its own democratic spirit only. Like her, it must place in the van, and hold up at all hazards, the banner of the divine pride of man in himself (the radical foundation of the new religion). Long enough have the People been listening to poems in which common humanity, deferential, bends low, humiliated, acknowledging superiors. But America listens to no such poems. Erect, inflated, and fully self-esteeming be the chant; and then America will listen with pleased ears.

Nor may the genuine gold, the gems, when brought to light at last, be probably usher'd forth from any of the quarters currently counted on. To-day, doubtless, the infant genius of American poetic expression (eluding those highly-refined imported and gilt-edged themes, and sentimental and butterfly flights, pleasant to orthodox publishers—causing tender spasms in the coteries, and warranted not to chafe the sensitive cuticle of the most exquisitely artificial gossamer delicacy), lies sleeping far away, happily unrecognised and uninjured by the coteries, the art-writers, the talkers and critics of the saloons, or the lecturers in the colleges—lies sleeping, aside, unrecking itself, in some western idiom, or native Michigan or Tennessee repartee, or stump-speech—or in Kentucky or Georgia, or the Carolinas—or in some slang or local song or allusion of the Manhattan, Boston, Philadelphia, or Baltimore mechanic—or up in the Maine woods—or off in the hut of the California 'miner, or

crossing the Rocky Mountains, or along the Pacific railroad—or on the breasts of the young farmers of the north-west, or Canada, or boatmen of the lakes. Rude and rude nursing-beds, these; but only from such beginnings and stocks indigenous here, may haply arrive, be grafted, and sprout in time, flowers of genuine American aroma, and fruits truly and fully our own.

I say it were a standing disgrace to these States—I say it were a disgrace to any nation, distinguished above others by the variety and vastness of its territories, its materials, its inventive activity, and the splendid practicality of its people, not to rise and soar above others, also in its original styles in literature and art, and its own supply of intellectual and esthetic masterpieces, archetypal, and consistent with itself. I know not a land except ours that has not, to some extent, however small, made its title clear. The Scotch have their born ballads, subtly expressing their past and present, and expressing character. The Irish have theirs. England, Italy, France, Spain, theirs. What has America? With exhaustless mines of the richest ore of epic, lyric, tale, tune, picture, etc., in the Four Years' War; with, indeed, I sometimes think, the richest masses of material ever afforded a nation more variegated, and on a larger scale—the first sign of proportionate, native, imaginative Soul, and first-class works to match, is (I cannot too often repeat), so far wanting.

Long ere the second centennial arrives, there will be some forty to fifty great States, among them Canada and Cuba. When the present century closes, our population will be sixty or seventy millions. The Pacific will be ours, and the Atlantic mainly ours. There will be daily electric communication with every part of the globe. What an age! What a land! Where, elsewhere, one so great? The individuality of one nation must then, as always, lead the world. Can there be any doubt who the leader ought to be? Bear in mind, though, that nothing less than the mightiest original non-subordinated Soul has ever really, gloriously led, or ever can lead. (This Soul—its other name, in these Vistas, is LITERATURE).

In fond fancy leaping those hundred years ahead let us survey America's works, poems, philosophies, fulfilling prophecies, and giving form and decision to best ideals. Much that is now undreamed of, we might then perhaps see established, luxuriantly cropping forth, richness, vigour of letters and of artistic expression, in whose products character will be a main requirement, and not merely erudition or elegance.

Intense and loving comradeship, the personal and passionate attachment of man to man—which, hard to define, underlies the lessons and ideals of the profound saviours of every land and age, and which seems to promise, when thoroughly developed, cultivated, and recognised in manners and literature, the most substantial hope and safety of the future of these States, will then be fully expressed.¹

* A strong-fibred joyousness and faith, and the sense of health *al fresco*, may well enter into the preparation of future noble American authorship. Part of the test of a great literatus shall be the absence in him of the idea of the covert, the lurid, the maleficent, the devil, the grim estimates inherited from the Puritans, hell, natural depravity, and the like. The great literatus will be known, among the rest, by his cheerful simplicity, his adherence to natural standards, his limitless faith in God, his reverence, and by the absence in him of doubt, ennui, burlesque, per-illage, or any strained and temporary fashion.

Nor must I fail, again and yet again, to clinch, reiterate more plainly still (O that indeed such survey as we fancy may show in time this part completed also!) the lofty aim, surely the proudest and the purest, in whose service the future literatus of whatever field, may gladly labour. As we have intimated, offsetting the material civilisation of our race, our nationality, its wealth, territories, factories, population, products, trade, and military and naval strength, and breathing breath of life into all these, and more, must be its moral civilisation—the formulation, expression, aidance whereof, is the very highest height of literature. The climax of this loftiest range of civilisation, rising above all the gorgeous shows and results of wealth, intellect, power, and art, as such—above even theology and religious fervour—is to be its development, from the eternal bases, and the fit expression, of absolute Conscience, moral soundness, Justice.

¹ It is to the development, identification, and general prevalence of that fervid comradeship, of brotherly love, at least rivaling the amative love hitherto possessing imaginative literature, if not going beyond it, that I look for the counterbalance and offset of our materialistic and vulgar American democracy, and for the spiritualisation thereof. Many will say it is a dream, and will not follow my inferences—but I confidently expect a time when there will be seen, running like a half-hid warp through all the myriad audible and visible worldly interests of America, threads of manly friendship, fond and loving, pure and sweet, strong and life-long, carried to degrees hitherto unknown—not only giving tone to individual character, and making it unprecedently emotional, muscular, heroic, and refined, but having the deepest relations to general politics. I say democracy infers such loving comradeship, as its most inevitable twin or counterpart, without which it will be incomplete, is vain, and incapable of perpetuating itself.

Even in religious fervour there is a touch of animal heat. But moral conscientiousness, crystalline, without flaw, not Godlike only, entirely human, awes and enchants for ever. Great is emotional love, even in the order of the rational mind. But, if we must make gradations, I am clear there is something greater. Power, love, veneration, products, genius, esthetics, tried by subtlest comparisons, analyses, and in sevenest moods, somewhere fail, somehow become vain. Then nonetheless, with flowing stops, the lord, the sun, the last ideal comes. By the names right, justice, truth, we suggest, but do not describe it. To the world of men it remains a dream, an idea as they call it. But no dream is it to the wise—but the proudest, almost only solid lasting thing of all. Its analogy in the material universe is what holds together this world, and every object upon it, and carries its dynamics on for ever sure and safe. Its lack, and the persistent slinking of it, as in life, sociology, literature, politics, business, and even sermonising, these times, or any times, still leaves the abysm, the mortal flaw and smutch, mocking civilisation to-day, with all its unquestioned triumphs, and all the civilisation so far known.¹

Present literature, while magnificently fulfilling certain popular demands, with plenteous knowledge and verbal smartness, is profoundly sophisticated, insane, and its very joy is morbid. It needs tally and express Nature, and the spirit of Nature, and to know and obey the standards. I say the question of Nature, largely considered, involves the questions of the esthetic, the emotional, and the religious—and involves happiness. A fitly born and bred race, growing up in right conditions of out-door as much as in door harmony, activity

¹ I am reminded as I write that out of this very conscience, or idea of conscience, of intense moral right, and in its name and strained construction, the worst fanaticisms, wars, persecutions, murders, etc., have yet, in all lands, in the past, been broached, and have come to their devilish fruition. Much is to be said, but I may say here, and in response, that side by side with the unflagging stimulation of the elements of religion and conscience must henceforth move with equal sway, science, absolute reason, and the general proportionate development of the whole man. These scientific facts, deductions, are divine too—precious counted parts of moral civilisation, and, with physical health, indispensable to it, to prevent fanaticism. For abstract religion, I perceive, is easily led astray, ever credulous, and is capable of devouring, remorseless, like fire and flame. Conscience, too, isolated from all else, and from the emotional nature, may but attain the beauty and purity of glacial, snowy ice. We want, for these States, for the general character, a cheerful, religious fervour, endued with the ever-present modifications of the human emotions, friendship, benevolence, with a fair field for scientific inquiry, the right of individual judgment, and always the cooling influences of material Nature.

and development, would probably, from and in those conditions, find it enough merely *to live*—and would, in their relations to the sky, air, water, trees, etc., and to the countless common shows, and in the fact of life itself, discover and achieve happiness—with Being suffused night and day by wholesome ecstasy, surpassing all the pleasures that wealth, amusement, and even gratified intellect, erudition, or the sense of art, can give.

• In the prophetic literature of these States (the reader of my speculations will miss their principal stress unless he allows well for the point that a new Literature, perhaps a new Metaphysics, certainly a new Poetry, are to be, in my opinion, the gully sure and worthy supports and expressions of the American Democracy), Nature, true Nature, and the true idea of Nature, long absent, must, above all, become fully restored, enlarged, and must furnish the pervading atmosphere to poems, and the test of all high literary and æsthetic compositions. I do not mean the smooth walks, trimmed hedges, posys and nightingales of the English poets, but the whole orb, with its geologic history, the cosmos, carrying fire and snow, that rolls through the illimitable areas, light as a feather, though weighing billions of tons. Furthermore, as by what we now partially call Nature is intended, at most, only what is entertainable by the physical conscience, the sense of matter, and of good animal health—on these it must be distinctly accumulated, incorporated, that man, comprehending these, has, in towering superaddition, the moral and spiritual consciences, indicating his destination beyond the ostensible, the mortal.

To the heights of such estimate of Nature indeed ascending, we proceed to make observations for our Vistas, breathing rarest air. What is I believe called Idealism seems to me to suggest (guarding against extravagance, and ever modified even by its opposite) the course of inquiry and desert of favour for our New World metaphysics, their foundation of and in literature, giving hue to all.¹

¹ The culmination and fruit of literary artistic expression, and its final fields of pleasure for the human soul, are in metaphysics, including the mysteries of the spiritual world, the soul itself, and the question of the immortal continuation of our identity. In all ages, the mind of man has brought up here—and always will. Here, at least, of whatever race or era, we stand on common ground. Applause, too, is unanimous, antique or modern. Those authors who work well in this field—though their reward, instead of a handsome percentage, or royalty, may be but simply the laurel-crown of the victors in the great Olympic games—will be dearest to humanity, and their works, however esthetically defective, will be treasured for ever. The altitude of literature and poetry has always been religion—and always will be. The Indian Vedas, the Nacchas of Zoroaster,

The elevating and etherealising ideas of the unknown and of unreality must be brought forward with authority, as they are the legitimate heirs of the known, and of reality—at least as great as their parents. Fearless of scoffing, and of the ostent, let us take our stand, our ground, and never desert it, to confront the growing excess and arrogance of realism. To the cry, now victorious—the cry of sense, science, flesh, incomes, farms, merchandise, logic, intellect, demonstrations, solid perpetuities, buildings of brick and iron, or even the facts of the shows of trees, earth, rocks, etc., fear not, my brethren, my sisters, to sound out with equally determined voice, that conviction brooding within the recesses of every envisioned soul—illusions! apparitions! figments all! True, we must not condemn the show, neither absolutely deny it, for the indispensability of its meanings; but how clearly we see that, migrate in soul to what we can already conceive of superior and spiritual points of view, and palpable as it seems under present relations, it all and several might, nay certainly would, fall apart and vanish.

the Talmud of the Jews, the Old Testament, the Gospel of Christ and His disciples, Plato's works, the Koran of Mohammedi, the Edda of Snorro, and so on toward our own day, to Swedenborg, and to the invaluable contributions of Leibnitz, Kant, and Hegel—these, with such poems only in which (while singing well of persons and events, of the passions of man, and the shows of the material universe), the religious tone, the consciousness of mystery, the recognition of the future, of the unknown, of Deity over and under all, and of the divine purpose, are never absent, but indirectly give tone to all—exhibit literature's real heights and elevations, towering up like the great mountains of the earth.

Standing on this ground—the last, the highest, only permanent ground—and sternly criticising, from it, all works, either of the literary, or any art, we have peremptorily to dismiss every pretensive production, however fine its esthetic or intellectual points, which violates or ignores, or even does not celebrate, the central divine idea of All, suffusing universe, of eternal trains of purpose, in the development, by however slow degrees, of the physical, moral, and spiritual cosmos. I say he has studied, meditated to no profit, whatever may be his mere erudition, who has not absorbed this simple consciousness and faith. It is not entirely new—but it is for Democracy to elaborate it, and look to build upon and expand from it, with uncompromising reliance. Above the doors of teaching the inscription is to appear, Though little or nothing can be absolutely known, perceived, except from a point of view which is evanescent, yet we know at least one permanency, that Time and Space, in the will of God, furnish successive chains, completions of material births and beginnings, solve all discrepancies, fears and doubts, and eventually fulfil happiness—and that the prophecy of those births, namely spiritual results, throws the true arch over all teaching, all science. The local considerations of sin, disease, deformity, ignorance, death, etc., and their measurement by the superficial mind, and ordinary legislation and theology, are to be met by science, boldly accepting, promulgating this faith, and planting the seeds of superhuman laws—of the explication of the physical universe through the spiritual—and clearing the way for a religion, sweet and unimpeachable alike to little child or great savan.

I hail with joy the oceanic, variegated, intense practical energy, the demand for facts, even the business materialism of the current age, our States. But woe to the age and land in which these things, movements, stopping at themselves, do not tend to ideas. As fuel to flame, and flame to the heavens, so must wealth, science, materialism—even this democracy of which we make so much—unerringly feed the highest mind, the soul. Infinitude the flight: fathomless the mystery. Man, so diminutive, dilates beyond the sensible universe, competes with, outcopes space and time, meditating even one great idea. Thus, and thus only, does a human being, his spirit, ascend above, and justify, objective Nature, which, probably nothing in itself, is incredibly and divinely serviceable, indispensable, real, here. And as the purport of objective Nature is doubtless folded, hidden, somewhere here—as somewhere here is what this globe and its manifold forms, and the light of day, and night's darkness, and life itself, with all its experiences, are for—it is here the great literature, especially verse, must get its inspiration and throbbing blood. Then may we attain to a poetry worthy the immortal soul of man, and which, while absorbing materials, and, in their own sense, the shows of Nature, will, above all, have, both directly and indirectly, a freeing, fluidising, expanding, religious character, exulting with science, fructifying the moral elements, and stimulating aspirations, and meditations on the unknown.

The process, so far, is indirect and peculiar, and though it may be suggested, cannot be defined. Observing, rapport, and with intuition, the shows and forms presented by Nature, the sensuous luxuriance, the beautiful in living men and women, the actual play of passions, in history and life—and, above all, from those developments either in Nature or human personality in which power (dearest of all to the sense of the artist) transacts itself—out of these, and seizing what is in them, the poet, the esthetic worker in any field, by the divine magic of his genius, projects them, their analogies, by curious removes, indirections, in literature and art. (No useless attempt to repeat the material creation, by daguerreotyping the exact likeness by mortal mental means.) This is the image-making faculty, coping with material creation, and rivalling, almost triumphing over it. This alone, when all the other parts of a specimen of literature or art are ready and waiting, can breathe into it the breath of life, and endow it with identity.

“The true question to ask,” says the librarian of Congress

in a paper read before the Social Science Convention at New York, October 1869, "The true question to ask respecting a book, is, *has it helped any human soul?*" This is the hint, statement, not only of the great literatus, his book, but of every great artist. It may be that all works of art are to be first tried by their art qualities, then image-forming talent, and their dramatic, pictorial, plot-constructing, euphonious and other talents. Then, whenever claiming to be first class works, they are to be strictly and sternly tried by their foundation in, and radiation, in the highest sense and always indirectly, of, the *ethic* principles, and eligibility to free, arouse, dilate

As, within the purposes of the Cosmos, and vivifying all meteorology, and all the congeries of the mineral, vegetable and animal worlds—all the physical growth and development of man, and all the history of the race of politics, religions, wars, etc., there is a moral purpose, a visible or invisible intention, certainly underlying all—its results and proof needing to be patiently waited for—needing intuition, faith, idiosyncrasy, to its realisation, which many, and especially the intellectual, do not have—so in the product, or congenies of the product, of the greatest literatus. This is the last, profoundest measure and test of a first class literary or esthetic achievement, and when understood and put in force must, I say, lead to works, books, nobler than any hitherto known. Lo! Nature (the only complete, actual poem), existing calmly in the divine scheme, containing all, content, careless of the criticisms of a day, or these endless and wordy chatterers. And lo! to the consciousness of the soul, the permanent identity, the thought, the something, before which the magnitude even of democracy, art, literature, etc., dwindles, becomes partial, measurable—something that fully satisfies (which those do not). That something is the All, and the idea of All, with the accompanying idea of eternity, and of itself, the soul, buoyant, indestructible, sailing space for ever, visiting every region, as a ship the sea. And again lo! the pulsations in all matter, all spirit, throbbing for ever—the eternal beats, eternal systole and diastole of life in things—wherefrom I feel and know that death is not the ending, as was thought, but rather the real beginning—and that nothing ever is or can be lost, nor ever die, nor soul, nor matter.

In the future of these States must arise poets—immenser far, and make great poems of death. The poems of life are great, but there must be the poems of the purports of life, not only in itself, but beyond itself. I have eulogised Homer, the

sacred bards of Jewry, Eschylus, Juvenal, Shakespeare, etc., and acknowledged their inestimable value. But (with perhaps the exception in some, not all respects, of the second-mentioned) I say there must, for future and democratic purposes, appear poets (dare I to say so?) of higher class even than any of those—poets not only possessed of the religious fire and abandon of Isaiah, luxuriant in the epic talent of Homer, or for proud characters as in Shakespeare, but consistent with the Hegelian formulas, and consistent with modern science. America needs, and the world needs, a class of bards who will, now and ever, so link and tally the rational physical being of man, with the ensembles of time and space, and with this vast and multiform show, Nature, surrounding him, ever tantalising him, equally a part, and yet not a part of him, as to essentially harmonise, satisfy, and put at rest. Faith, very old, now scared away by science, must be restored, brought back by the same power that caused her departure—restored with new sway, deeper, wider, higher than ever. Surely, this universal ennui, this coward fear, this shuddering at death, these low, degrading views, are not always to rule the spirit pervading future society, as it has the past, and does the present. What the Roman Lucretius sought most nobly, yet all too blindly, negatively to do for his age and its successors, must be done positively by some great coming literatus, especially poet, who, while remaining fully poet, will absorb whatever science indicates, with spiritualism, and out of them, and out of his own genius, will compose the great poem of death. Then will man indeed confront Nature, and confront time and space, both with science, and *con amore*, and take his right place, prepared for life, master of fortune and misfortune. And then that which was long wanted will be supplied, and the ship that had it not before in all her voyages, will have an anchor.

There are still other standards, suggestions, for products of high literatures. That which really balances and conserves the social and political world is not so much legislation, police, treaties, and dread of punishment, as the latent eternal intuitional sense, in humanity, of fairness, manliness, decorum, etc. Indeed, this perennial regulation, control, and oversight, by self-supplance, is *sine qua non* to democracy; and a highest, widest aim of democratic literature may well be to bring forth, cultivate, brace, and strengthen this sense, in individuals and society. A strong mastership of the general inferior self by the superior self, is to be aided, secured, indirectly, but surely, by

the literatus, in his works, shaping, for individual or aggregate democracy, a great passionate body, in and along with which goes a great masterful spirit.

And still, providing for contingencies, I face confront the fact, the need of powerful native philosophers and orators and bards, these States, as rallying points to come, in times of danger, and to fend off ruin and defection. For history is long, long, long. Shift and turn the combinations of the statement as we may, the problem of the future of America is in certain respects as dark as it is vast. Pride, competition, segregation, vicious wilfulness, and licence beyond example, brood already upon us.* Unwieldy and immense, who shall hold in behemoth? who bridle leviathan? Flaunt it as we choose, athwart and over the roads of our progress loom huge uncertainty, and dreadful, threatening gloom. It is useless to deny it: Democracy grows rankly up the thickest, noxious, deadliest plants and fruits of all—brings worse and worse invaders—needs newer, larger, stronger, keener compensations and compellers.

Our lands, embracing so much (embracing indeed the whole, rejecting none), hold in their breast that flame also, capable of consuming themselves, consuming us all. *Short as the span of our national life has been, already have death and downfall crowded close upon us—and will again crowd close, no doubt, even if warded off. Ages to come may never know, but I know, how narrowly during the late secession war—and more than once, and more than twice or thrice—our Nationality (wherein bound up, as in a ship in a storm, depended, and yet depend, all our best life, all hope, all value), just grazed, just by a hair escaped destruction. *Alas! to think of them! the agony and bloody sweat of certain of those hours! those cruel, sharp, suspended crises!

Even to-day, amid these whirls, incredible flippancy, and blind fury of parties, infidelity, entire lack of first-class captains and leaders, added to the plentiful meanness and vulgarity of the ostensible masses—that problem, the labour question, beginning to open like a yawning gulf, rapidly widening every year—what prospect have we? We sail a dangerous sea of seething currents, cross and under-currents, vortices—all so dark, untried—and whither shall we turn? It seems as if the Almighty had spread before this nation charts of imperial destinies, dazzling as the sun, yet with many a deep intestine difficulty, and human aggregate of cankerous imperfection—saying, lo! the roads, the only plans of development, long and varied with all terrible balks

and ebullitions. You said in your soul, I will be empire of empires, overshadowing all else, past and present, putting the history of old-world dynasties, conquests behind me, as of no account—making a new history, a history of democracy, making old history a dwarf.—I alone inaugurating largeness, culminating time. If these, O lands of America, are indeed the prizes, the determinations of your soul, be it so. But behold the cost, and already specimens of the cost. Thought you greatness was to ripen for you like a pear? If you would have greatness, know that you must conquer it through ages, centuries—must pay for it with a proportionate price. For you too, as for all lands, the struggle, the traitor, the wily person in office, scrofulous wealth, the surfeit of prosperity, the demonism of greed, the hell of passion, the decay of faith, the long postponement, the fossil-like lethargy, the ceaseless need of revolutions, prophets, thunderstorms, deaths, births, new projections and invigorations of ideas and men.

Yet I have dreamed, merged in that hidden-tangled problem of our fate, whose long unraveling stretches mysteriously through time—dreamed out, portrayed, hinted already—a little or a larger band—a band of brave and true, unprecedented yet armed and equipped at every point—the members separated, it may be, by different dates and States, or south, or north, or east, or west—Pacific, Atlantic, Southern, Canadian—a year, a century here, and other centuries there—but always one, compact in soul, conscience conserving, God-inculcating, inspired achievers, not only in literature, the greatest art, but achievers in all art—a new, undying order, dynasty, from age to age transmitted—a band, a class, at least as fit to cope with current years, our dangers, needs, as those who, for their times, so long, so well, in armour or in cowl, upheld and made illustrious, that far-back feudal, priestly world. To offset chivalry, indeed, those vanished countless knights, old altars, abbeys, priests, ages and strings of ages, a knightlier and more sacred cause to-day demands, and shall supply, in a New World, to larger, grander work, more than the counterpart and tally of them.

Arrived now, definitely, at an apex for these Vistas, I confess that the promulgation and belief in such a class or institution—a new and greater literatus order—its possibility (nay certainty), underlies these entire speculations—and that the rest, the other parts, as superstructures, are all founded upon it. It really seems to me the condition, not only of our future national and democratic development, but of our perpetuation. In the

highly artificial and materialistic bases of modern civilisation, with the corresponding arrangements and methods—among, the force-infusion of intellect alone, the depraving of values of riches just as much as poverty, the absence of all high ideals in character—with the long series of tendencies, shapings, which few are strong enough to resist, and which now, with steam-engine speed, to be everywhere turning out the generations of humanity like uniform iron castings—all of which, as compared with the feudal ages, we can yet do nothing better than accept, make the best of, and even welcome, upon the whole, for their oceanic practical grandeur, and their restless wholesale kneading of the masses—I say of all this tremendous and dominant play of solely materialistic bearings upon current life in the United States, with the results as already seen, accumulating and reaching far into the future, that they must either be confronted and met by at least an equally subtle and tremendous force-infusion for purposes of spiritualisation, for the pure conscience, for genuine esthetics, and for absolute and primal manliness and womanliness—or else our modern civilisation, with all its improvements, is in vain, and we are on the road to a destiny, a status, equivalent, in its real world, to that of the fabled damned.

Prospecting thus the coming unsped days, and that new order in them—marking the endless train of exercise, development, unwind, in nation as in man, which life is for—we see, fore-indicated, amid these prospects and hopes, new law-forces of spoken and written language—not merely the pedagogue-forms, correct, regular, familiar with precedents, made for matters of outside propriety, fine words, thoughts definitely told out—but a language fanned by the breath of Nature, which leaps overhead, cares mostly for impetus and effects, and for what it plants and invigorates to grow—tallies life and character, and seldom tells a thing than suggests or necessitates it. In fact, a new theory of literary composition for imaginative works of the very first class, and especially for highest poems, is the sole course open to these States. Books are to be called for, and supplied, on the assumption that the process of reading is not a half sleep, but, in highest sense, an exercise, a gymnast's struggle; that the reader is to do something for himself, must be on the alert, must himself or herself construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay—the text furnishing the hints, the clue, the start or framework. Not the book needs so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does. That

were to make a nation of supple and athletic minds, well-trained, intuitive, used to depend on themselves, and not on a few coteries of writers.

Investigating here, we see, not that it is a little thing we have, in having the bequeathed libraries, countless shelves of volumes, records, etc.; yet how serious the danger, depending entirely on them, of the bloodless vein, the nerveless arm, the false application, at second or third hand. We see that the real interest of this people of ours in the theology, history, poetry, politics, and personal models of the past (the British islands, for instance, and indeed all the past), is not necessarily to mould ourselves or our literature upon them, but to attain fuller, more definite comparisons, warnings, and the insight to ourselves, our own present, and our own far grander, different, future history, religion, social customs, etc. We see that almost everything that has been written, sung, or stated, of old, with reference to humanity under the feudal and oriental institutes, religions, and for other lands, needs to be re-written, re-sung, re-stated, in terms consistent with the institution of these States, and to come in range and obedient uniformity with them.

We see, as in the universes of the material cosmos, after meteorological, vegetable, and animal cycles, man at last arises, born through them, to prove them, concentrate them, to turn upon them with wonder and love—to command them, adorn them, and carry them upward into superior realms—so, out of the series of the preceding social and political universes, now arise these States. We see that while many were supposing things established and completed, really the grandest things always remain; and discover that the work of the New World is not ended, but only fairly begun.

We see our land, America, her literature, esthetics, etc., as, substantially, the getting in form, or effusement and statement, of deepest basic elements and loftiest final meanings, of history and man—and the portrayal (under the eternal laws and conditions of beauty) of our own physiognomy, the subjective tie and expression of the objective, as from our own combination, continuation, and points of view—and the deposit and record of the national mentality, character, appeals, heroism, wars, and even liberties—where these, and all, culminate in native literary and artistic formulation, to be perpetuated; and not having which native, first-class formulation, she will flounder about, and her other, however imposing, eminent greatness, prove merely a passing gleam; but truly having which, she will under-

stand herself, live nobly, nobly contribute, emanate, and, swinging, poised safely on herself, illumined and illumining, become a full-formed world, and divine Mother the only of material but spiritual worlds, in ceaseless succession through time - the main thing being the average, the bodily, the concrete, the democratic, the popular, on which all the superstructures of the future are to permanently rest.

EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY

By ERNEST RHYS

VICTOR HUGO said a Library was "an act of faith" and some unknown essayist spoke of one so beautiful, so perfect, so harmonious in all its parts, that he who made it was smitten with a passion. In that faith the promoters of Everyman's Library planned it out originally on a large scale; and their idea in so doing was to make it conform as far as possible to a perfect scheme. However, perfection is a thing to be aimed at and not to be achieved in this difficult world, and since the first volumes appeared, now several years ago, there have been many interruptions. A great war has come and gone; and even the City of Books has felt something like a world commotion. Only in recent years is the series getting back into its old stride and looking forward to complete its original scheme of a Thousand Volumes. One of the practical expedients in that original plan was to divide the volumes into sections, as Biography, Fiction, History, Belle Lettres, Poetry, Romance, and so forth; with a compartment for young people, and last, and not least, one of Reference Books. Beside the dictionaries and encyclopedias to be expected in that section, there was a special set of literary and historical atlases. One of these atlases dealing with Europe, we may recall, was directly affected by the disturbance of frontiers during the war; and the maps had to be completely revised in consequence, so as to chart

the New Europe which we hope will now preserve its peace under the auspices of the League of Nations set up at Geneva.

That is only one small item, however, in a library list which runs already to the final centuries of the Thousand. The largest slice of this huge provision is, as a matter of course, given to the tyrannous demands of fiction. But in carrying out the scheme, publishers and editors contrived to keep in mind that books, like men and women, have their elective affinities. The present volume, for instance, will be found to have its companion books, both in the same section and even more significantly in other sections. With that idea too, novels like Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* and *Fortunes of Nigel*, Lytton's *Harold* and Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, have been used as pioneers of history and treated as a sort of holiday history books. For in our day history is tending to grow more documentary and less literary; and "the historian who is a stylist," as one of our contributors, the late Thomas Seccombe, said, "will soon be regarded as a kind of Phoenix." But in this special department of Everyman's Library we have been eclectic enough to choose our history men from every school in turn. We have Grote, Gibbon, Finlay, Macaulay, Motley, Prescott. We have among earlier books the Venerable Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, have completed a Livy in an admirable new translation by Canon Roberts, while Cæsar, Tacitus, Thucydides and Herodotus are not forgotten.

"You only, O Books," said Richard de Bury, "are liberal and independent; you give to all who ask." The delightful variety, the wisdom and the wit which are at the disposal of Everyman in his own library may well at times, seem to him a little embarrassing. He may turn to Dick Steele in *The Spectator* and learn how Cleonira dances, when the elegance of her motion is unimaginable and "her eyes are chastised with the simplicity and innocence of her thoughts." He may turn to Plato's Phædrus

and read how every soul is divided into three parts (like Caesar's Gaul). He may turn to the finest critic of Victorian times, Matthew Arnold, and find in his essay on Maurice Maeterlinck the perfect key to what is there called the "magic power of poetry." It is Shakespeare, with his

"daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
• The winds of March with beauty;"

it is Wordsworth, with his

"voice . . . heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides,"

or Keats, with his

".travelling waters at their priest-like talk
• Or cold abatement round Earth's humbler shores"

William Hazlitt's "Table Talk," among the volumes of *Essays*, may help to show the relationship of one author to another, which is another form of the Friendship of Books. The incomparable essay in that volume, "On Going a Journey," forms a capital prelude to Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria" and to his and Wordsworth's poems. In the same way one may turn to the review of Moore's *Life of Byron* in Macaulay's *Essays* as a prelude to the three volumes of Byron's own poems, remembering that the poet whom Europe loved more than England did was as Macaulay said: "the beginning, the middle and the end of all his own poetry." This brings us to the provoking reflection that it is the obvious authors and the books most easy to reprint which have been the signal successes out of the many hundreds in the series, for Everyman is distinctly proverbial in his tastes. He likes best of all an old author who has worn well or

a comparatively new author who has gained something like newspaper notoriety. In attempting to lead him on from the good books that are known to those that are less known, the publishers may have at times been too adventurous. The late *Chief* himself was much more than an ordinary book-producer in this critical enterprise. He threw himself into it with the zeal of a book lover and indeed of one who, like Milton, thought that books might be as alive and productive as dragons' teeth, which, being "sown up and down the land, might chance to spring up armed men."

Mr. Pepys in his *Diary* writes about some of his books, "which are come home gilt on the backs, very handsome to the eye." The pleasure he took in them is that which Everyman may take in the gilt backs of his favourite books in his own Library, which after all he has helped to make good and lasting.

